The Eisner and Harvey Award-winning series continues to storm down the path of vengeance and blood. The Shogun himself has given conniving Retsudo Yagyu a stern warning: do something about former executioner Itto Ogami, the Lone Wolf, or the Yagyu clan will fall out of favor. Now Retsudo must turn to the Fire Watchers, a select band of warriors, for help — as well as the last surviving members of the legendary Kurokuwa ninja clan! As death stalks him, Ogami is confronted by desperate, impoverished peasants who want him to share his fortune with the suffering. With Ogami's cub, Daigoro, caught in the middle, what will he decide? Find out in this volume of the series everyone can't stop talking about.

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— Stan Sakai
creator, Usagi Yojimbo

Published for the first time in America in the Japanese format.

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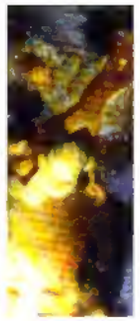
- EISNER AWARD WINNER



LONE WOLF AND CUB

KAZUO KOIKE & GOSEKI KOJIMA

LONE WOLF AND CUB

VOLUME 18

TWILIGHT OF THE KUROKUWA

By KAZUO KOIKE & GOSEKI KOJIMA

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TWILIGHT OF THE KUROKUWA

子連れ狼

By KAZUO KOIKE
& GOSEKI KOJIMA

VOLUME

18

A NOTE TO READERS

Lone Wolf and Cub is famous for its carefully researched re-creation of Edo-Period Japan. To preserve the flavor of the work, we have chosen to retain many Edo-Period terms that have no direct equivalents in English. Japanese is written in a mix of Chinese ideograms and a syllabic writing system, resulting in numerous synonyms. In the glossary, you may encounter words with multiple meanings. These are words written with Chinese ideograms that are pronounced the same but carry different meanings. A Japanese reader seeing the different ideograms would know instantly which meaning it is, but these synonyms can cause confusion when Japanese is spelled out in our alphabet. *O-yurushi o* (please forgive us)!

LONE WOLF AND CUB

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Firewatchers of the Black Gate 9

The Immortal Firewatchers 69

Paper Money 130

Lifeline 190

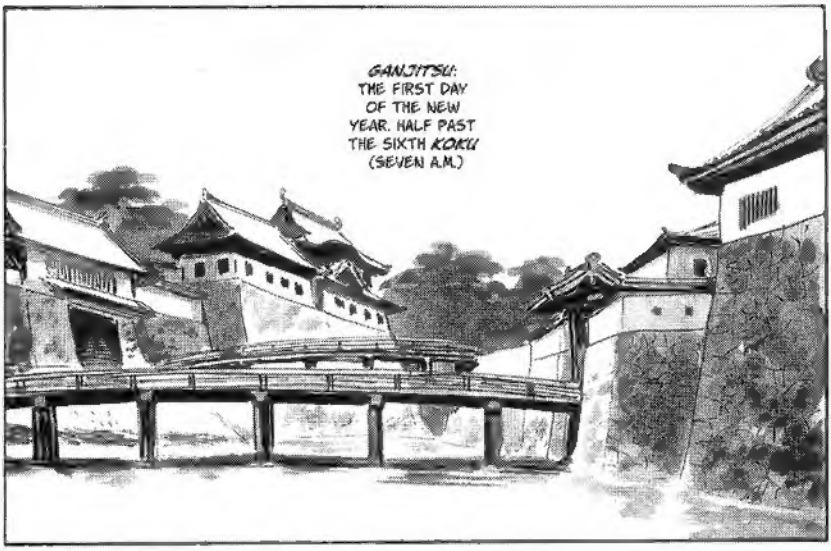
Twilight of the Kurokuwa 250

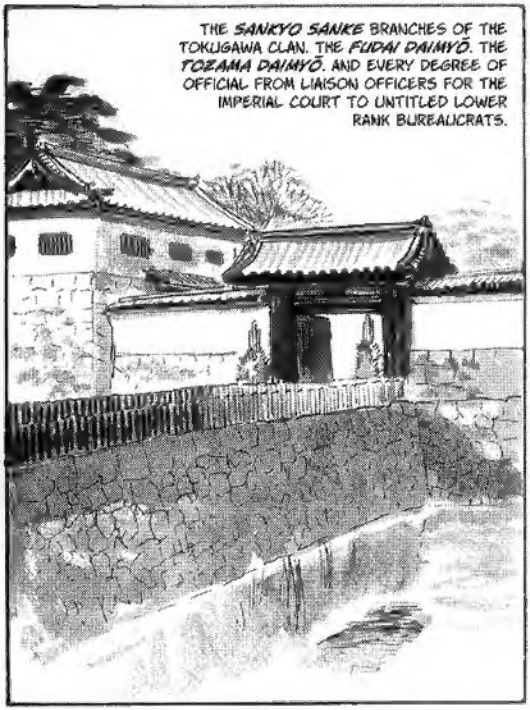
Glossary 309

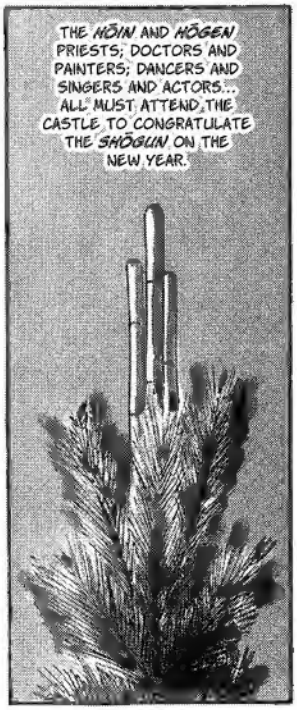
Creator Profiles 311

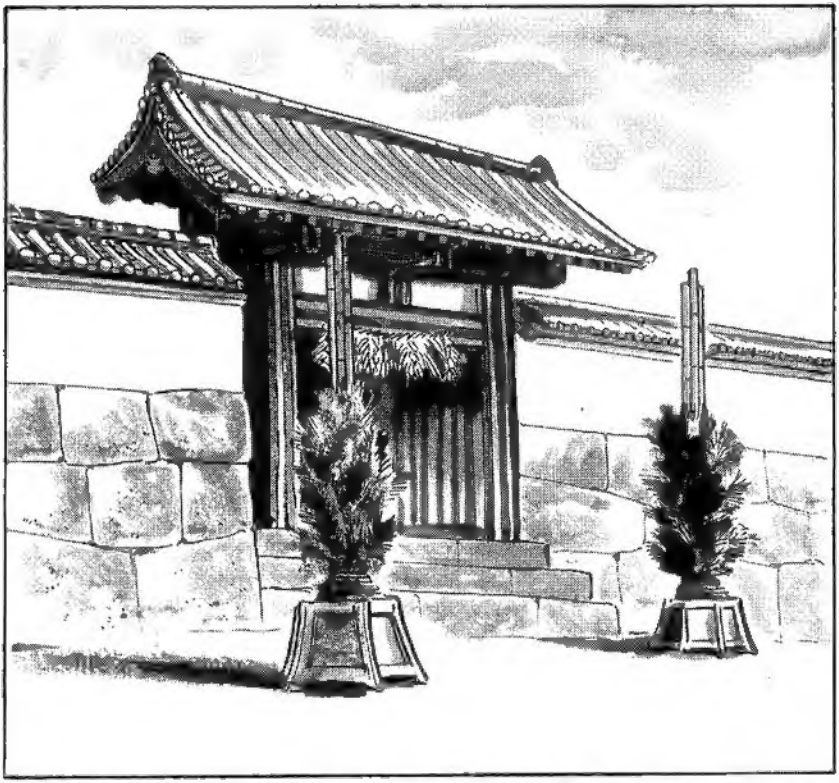
the eighty-eighth

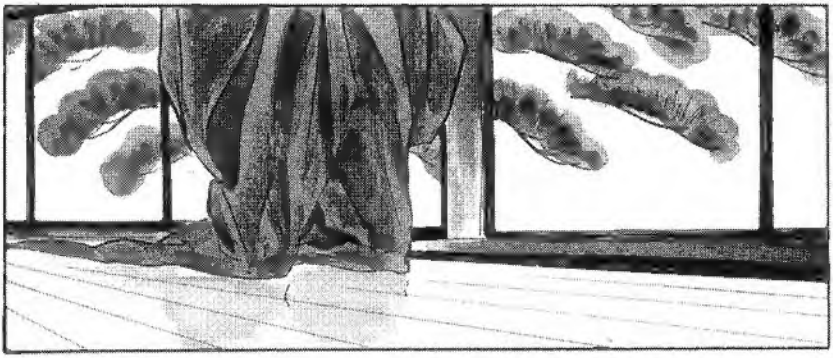
Firewatchers of the Black Gate

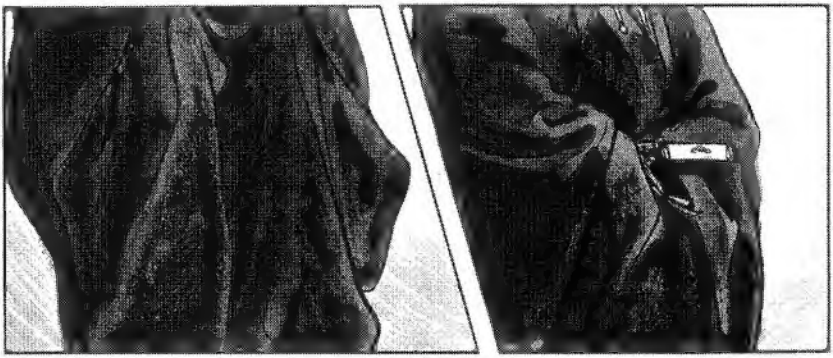

GANJITSU:
THE FIRST DAY
OF THE NEW
YEAR. HALF PAST
THE SIXTH *KOKU*
(SEVEN A.M.)

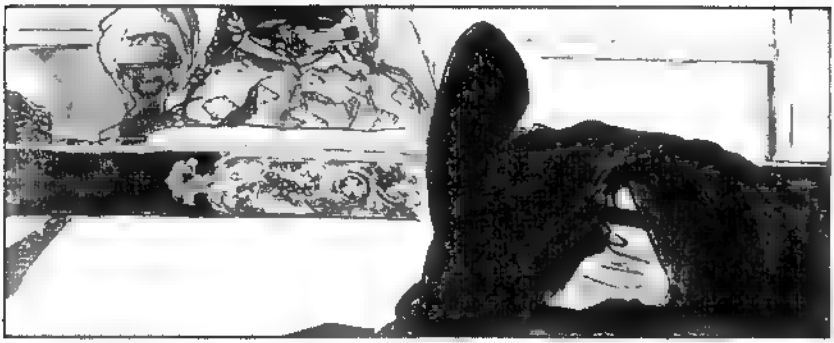

THE *SANKYO SANKE* BRANCHES OF THE TOKUGAWA CLAN. THE *FUDAI DAIMYŌ*. THE *TOZAMA DAIMYŌ*. AND EVERY DEGREE OF OFFICIAL FROM LIAISON OFFICERS FOR THE IMPERIAL COURT TO UNTITLED LOWER RANK BUREAUCRATS.

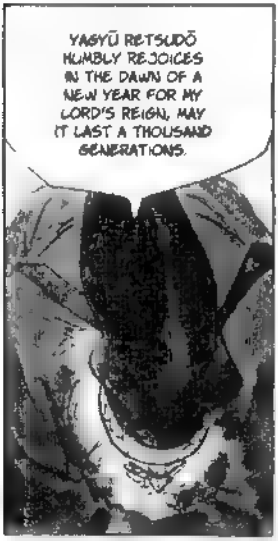

THE *HŌIN* AND *HŌGEN*, PRIESTS; DOCTORS AND PAINTERS; DANCERS AND SINGERS AND ACTORS... ALL MUST ATTEND THE CASTLE TO CONGRATULATE THE *SHŌGUN* ON THE NEW YEAR.

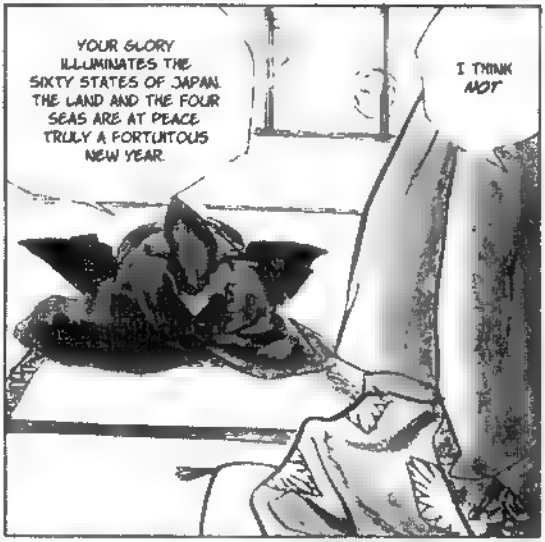




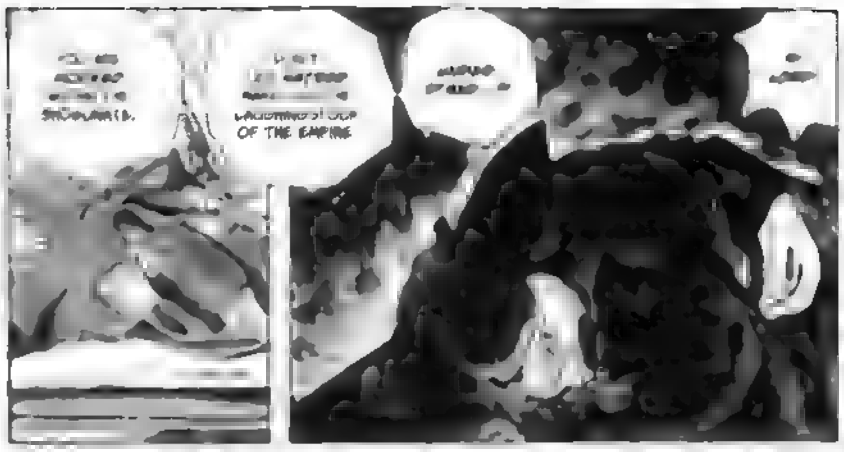




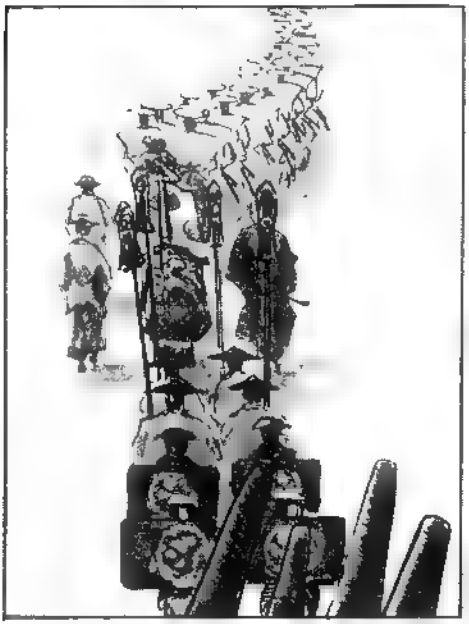

YASYŪ RETSUDŌ HUMBLY REJOICES IN THE DAWN OF A NEW YEAR FOR MY LORD'S REIGN, MAY IT LAST A THOUSAND GENERATIONS.

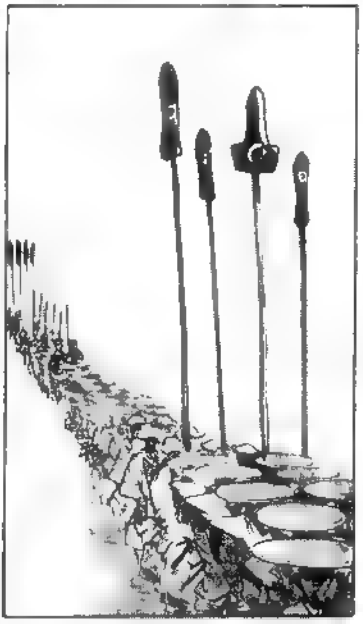

YOUR GLORY ILLUMINATES THE SIXTY STATES OF JAPAN. THE LAND AND THE FOUR SEAS ARE AT PEACE. TRULY A FORTUITOUS NEW YEAR.
I THINK NOT

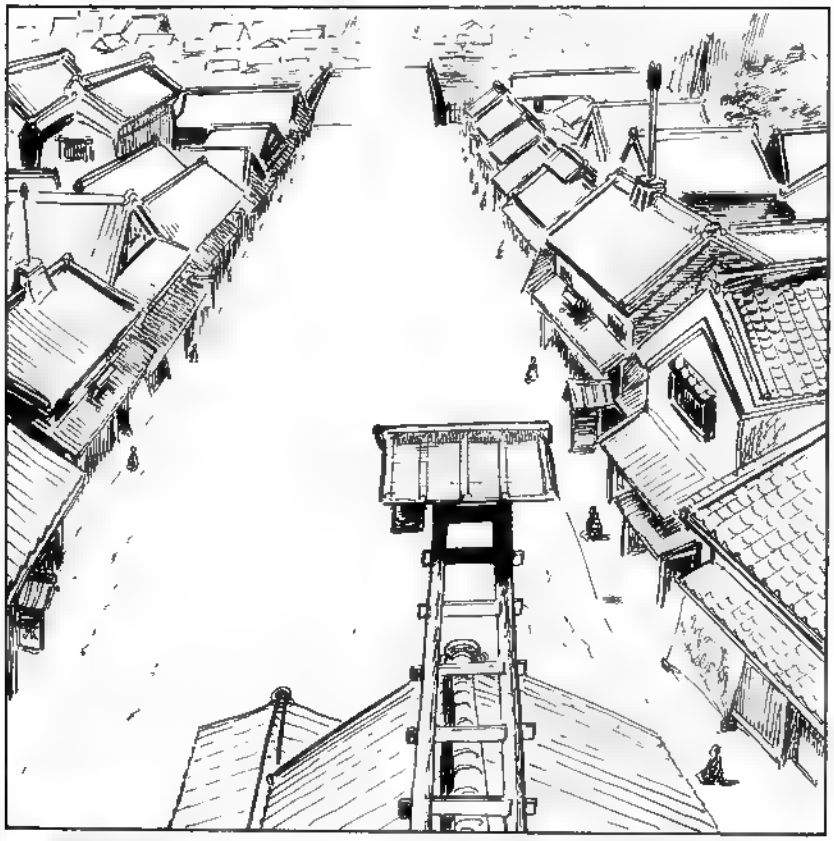
TWO MAN AND THREE
HUNT IT
KILL IT WITHIN
THE MONTH.
LEST YOUR
HEAD ROLL.


OF THE EMPIRE

THE TENTH DAY OF
THE NEW YEAR. THE
SHOGUN'S ANNUAL
PILGRIMAGE TO THE
FAMILY MAUSOLEUM.

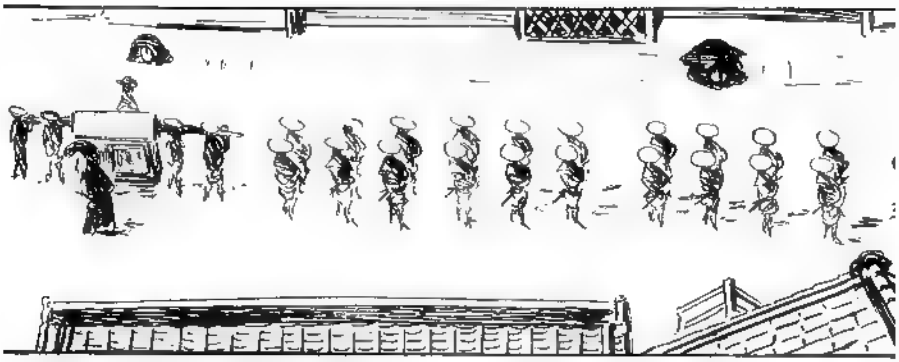


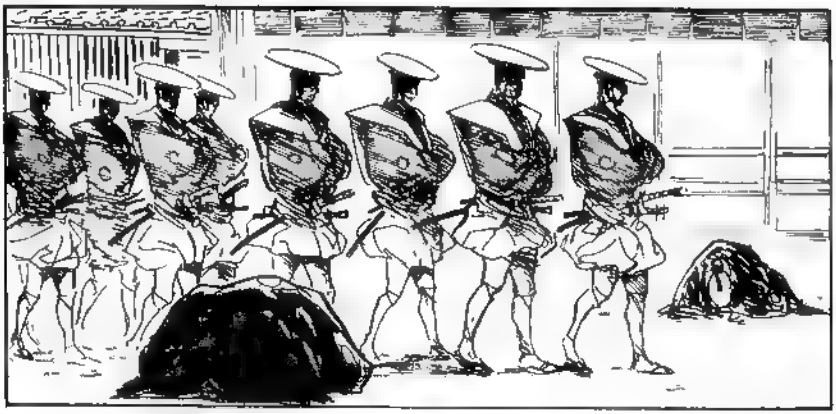




AT THE HOUR OF THE
SHŌGUN'S PASSAGE,
THE HEADS OF ALL
COMMON HOUSEHOLDS
ALONG HIS ROUTE.

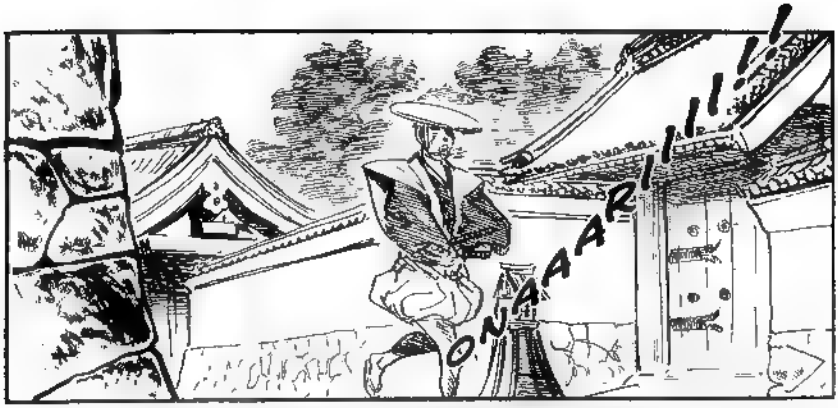
MUST SIT ON THEIR DOORSTEPS IN THEIR FINEST ROBES.
AND *PROSTRATE* THEMSELVES BEFORE HIS PALANQUIN.

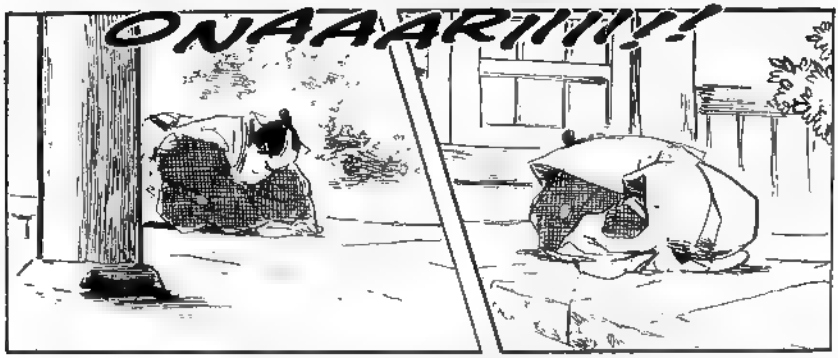


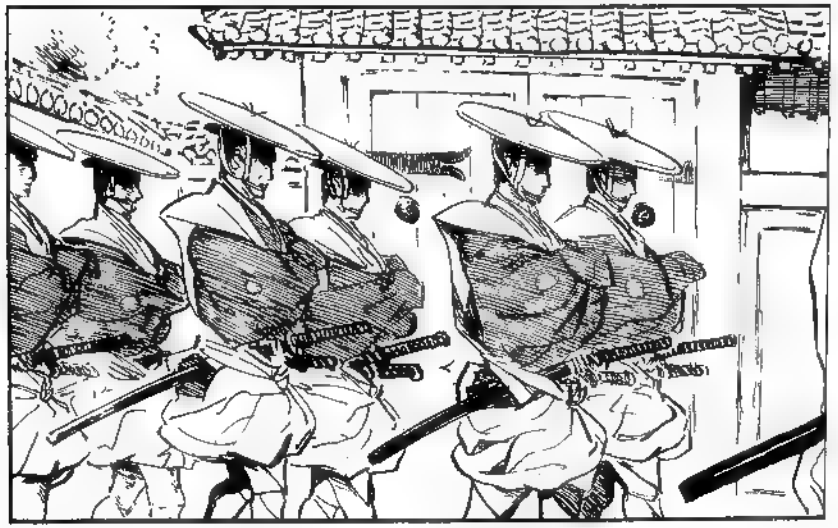


ALL *BUKE* SAMURAI ESTATES ALONG HIS ROUTE CLOSE THEIR GATES.

..AND THE CLAN HEAD, SEATED BEHIND CLOSED DOORS, PROSTRATES HIMSELF AT THE SHOUT OF THE *SAKIBURE-SŌMETSUKE* "OBEISANCE!"


ONAAAR!!!!!

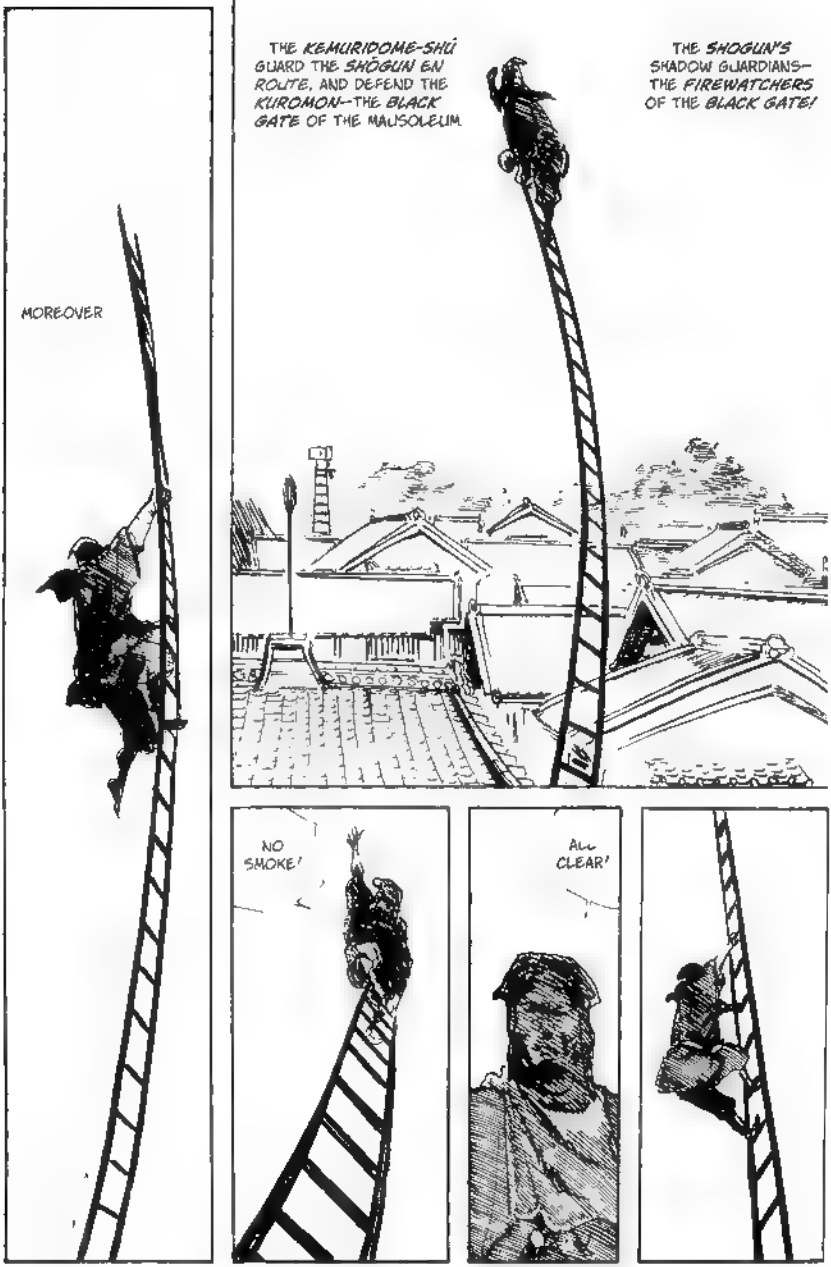

ONAAARIIIII!!



A BUFFER ZONE THREE WARDS DEEP ALONG THE PILGRIMAGE ROUTE IS DECLARED *KEMURIDOME*, A *SMOKE-FREE* ZONE.

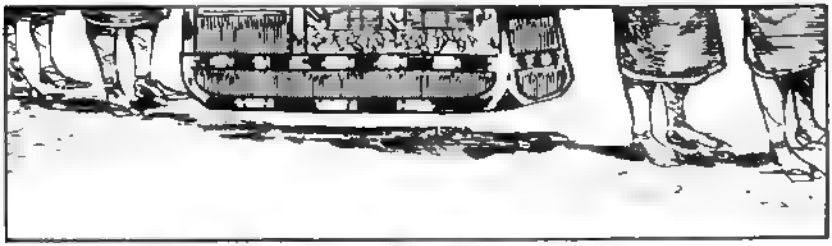
THE WARRIORS ASSIGNED TO ENSURE ALL FIRES ARE OUT ARE THE *KEMURIDOME-SHŪ*, HAND-PICKED FROM AMONG THE *SHŌGUN'S ASHIGARA* FOOT SOLDIERS.

KCHAK


MOREOVER
THE KEMURIDOME-SHÛ GUARD THE SHÔGUN EN ROUTE, AND DEFEND THE KUROMON—THE BLACK GATE OF THE MAUSOLEUM.
THE SHOGUN'S SHADOW GUARDIANS—THE FIREWATCHERS OF THE BLACK GATE!
NO SMOKE!
ALL CLEAR!

THESE KUROMON-GATAME KEMURIDOME-[illegible] ASA-SARA [illegible] SHŌGUN'S ESCORT AND THE GUARDIANS OF HIS [illegible] STRONGEST OF THE STRONG WERE CHOSEN.

AND SINCE THEY ONLY SERVED DURING THEIR [illegible] THEY COULD DEVOTE THE OTHER THREE HUNDRED [illegible] YEARS TO HONING THEIR COMBAT SKILLS. ASAGARA THEY WOULD ALWAYS BE, IN THIS CASTE-BOUND SOCIETY, BUT THEY WERE A TRUE ELITE



JIJI
MY LORD

I HEAR THE WOLF HAS *SCARRED* YOUR CLAN.
YOU SAID *SŌ-METSUKE* BIZEN DIED OF ILLNESS YET I HEAR IT WAS *WOLF BITE*

THE *SŌ-METSUKE* SHOULD WALK BESIDE MY PALANQUIN. BUT NOW HIS *FATHER* TAKES HIS PLACE. *IS* THIS THE *WOLF'S* HANDIWORK?

KRING!!
KRING!!

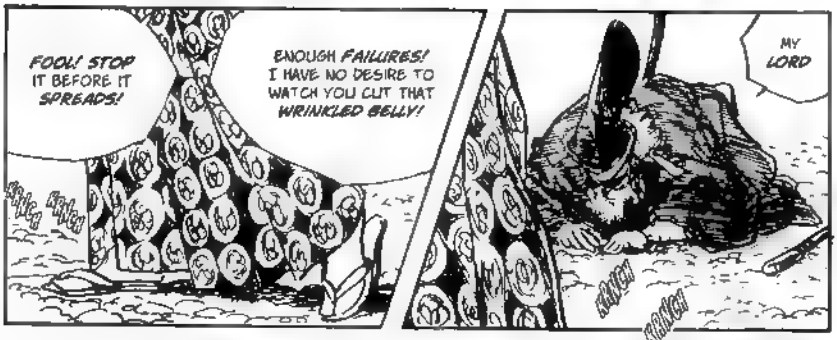
ŌGAMI ITTŌ KEPT MY MORTUARY TABLET IN HIS FAMILY TEMPLE TO CURSE ME.
YOU FREED HIM WITHOUT DEMANDING SEPPUKU YOUR MERCY BROUGHT THIS ABOUT YOUR PUNISHMENT FOR DEFYING MY WILL
KRINGG
KRINGG

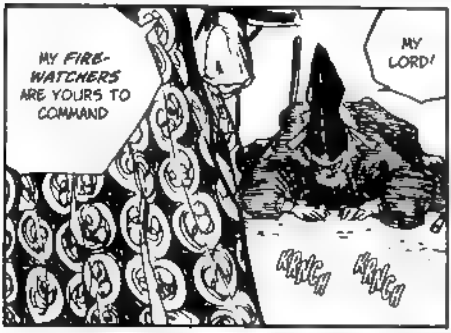
I NEVER DREAMED OF DEFYING YOU, MY LORD
I SET THE WRETCH FREE TO STOP HIM FROM ABUSING YOUR HOLLYHOCK CREST

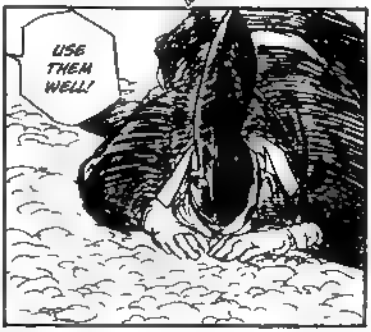
ENOUGH I TRUST YOUR LOYALTY, JIJI.
BUT ITTŌ'S RESISTANCE ERODES TOKUGAWA AUTHORITY!
KRINGG
KRINGG

HOW COULD I LOSE MY KUROKUWA TO A SINGLE WOLF? I AM LEFT BLIND IN THE SIGHT OF MY ENEMIES!

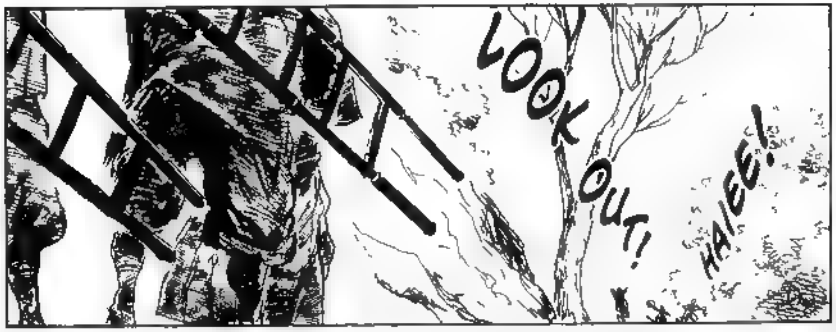
NO DOUBT HE'S STRONG. BUT SURELY NO MATCH FOR YOUR ASSASSINS?
MY LORD SOME IN THE HAN WOULD AID HIM—

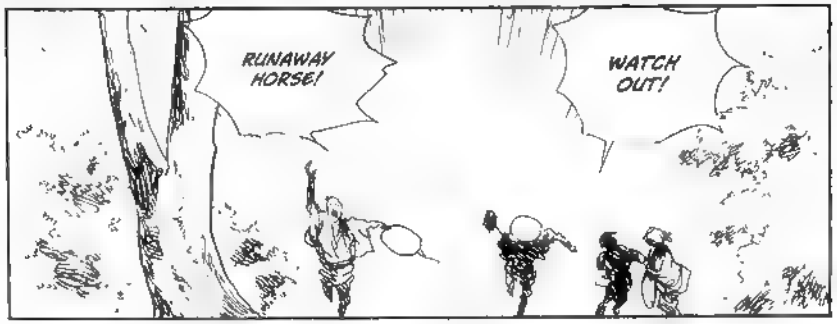

FOOL! STOP IT BEFORE IT SPREADS!
ENOUGH FAILURES! I HAVE NO DESIRE TO WATCH YOU CUT THAT WRINKLED BELLY!
MY LORD

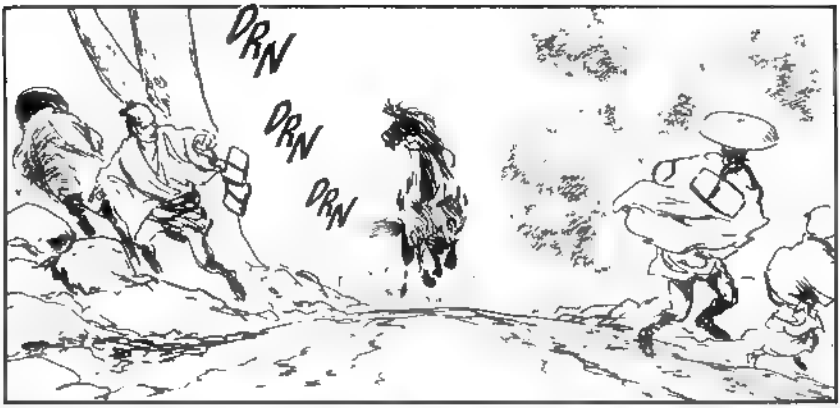

MY FIRE-WATCHERS ARE YOURS TO COMMAND
MY LORD!


USE THEM WELL!

NEXT, THE SHOGUN WOULD CHANGE HIS ROBES IN A DRESSING ROOM NEXT TO THE MAUSOLEUM BEFORE PRAYING AT THE TOMBS OF HIS ANCESTORS.


LOOK OUT!
HAIEE!


RUNAWAY HORSE!
WATCH OUT!



KTHOK

KTHOK

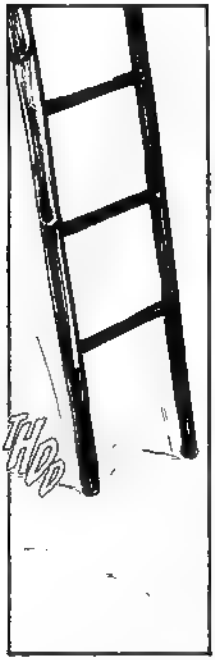
KTHOK

KTHOK

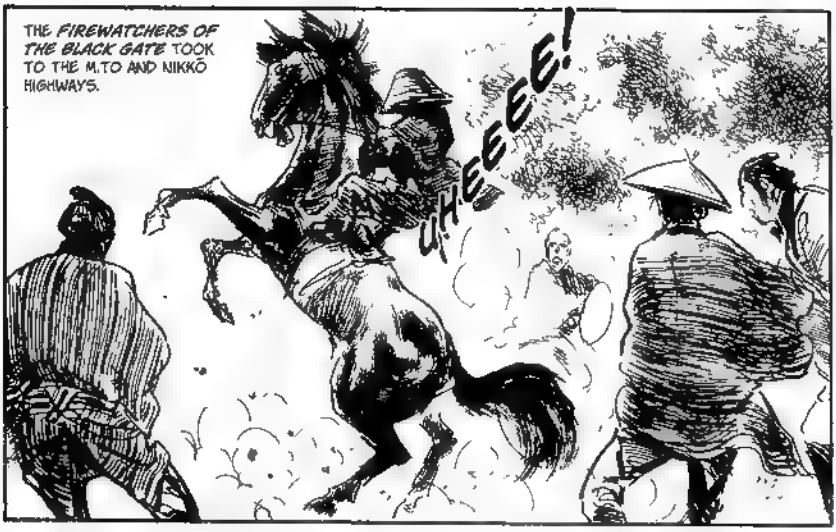
DRN
DRN
DRN

THOKKATA

DRNN
DRNN


TIB

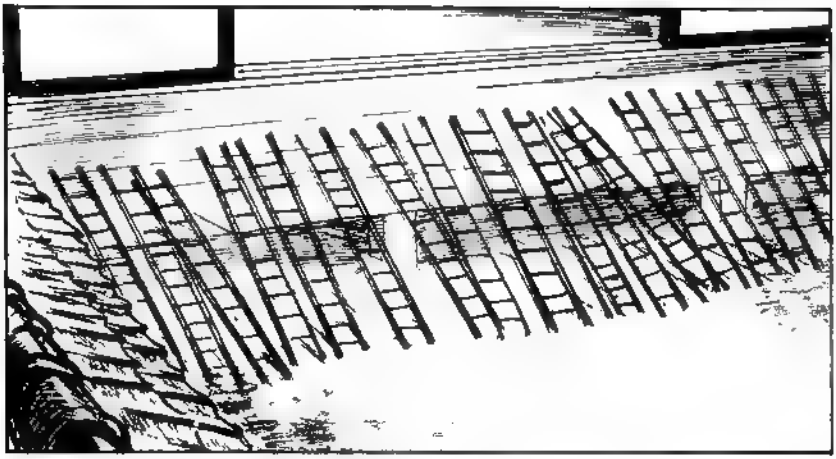
WHMP
THOKKA THOKKA

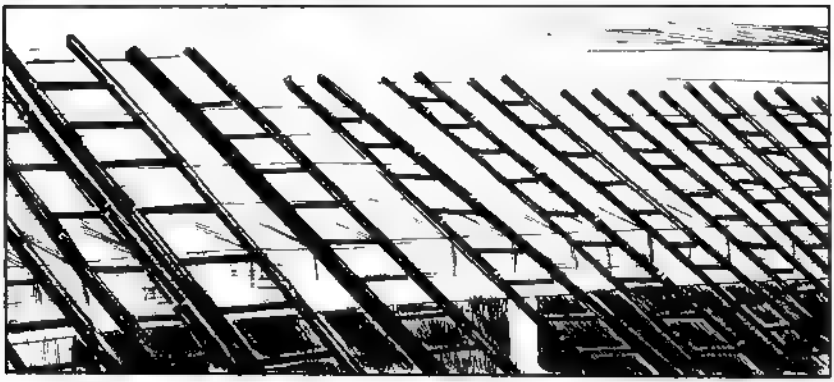

THE *FIREWATCHERS OF THE BLACK GATE* TOOK TO THE M.TO AND NIKKŌ HIGHWAYS.
U.HEEEE!

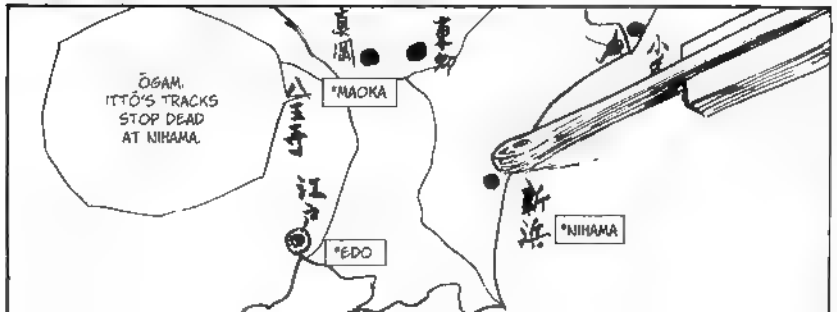
...THIS TIME AS *WOLF WATCHERS!*

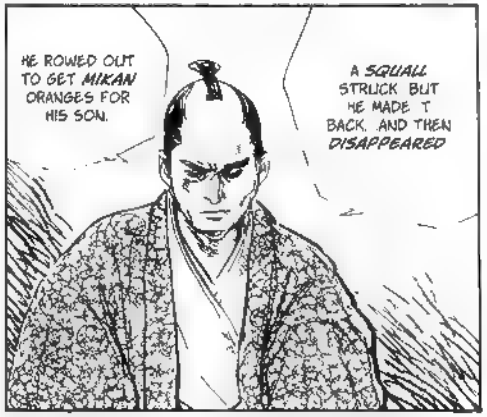
真岡代官所
*MAOKA DAIKANSHO

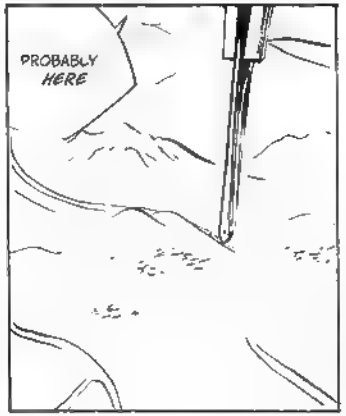
官所






ŌGAM. ITTŌ'S TRACKS STOP DEAD AT NIHAMA.
*MAOKA
*EDO
*NIHAMA

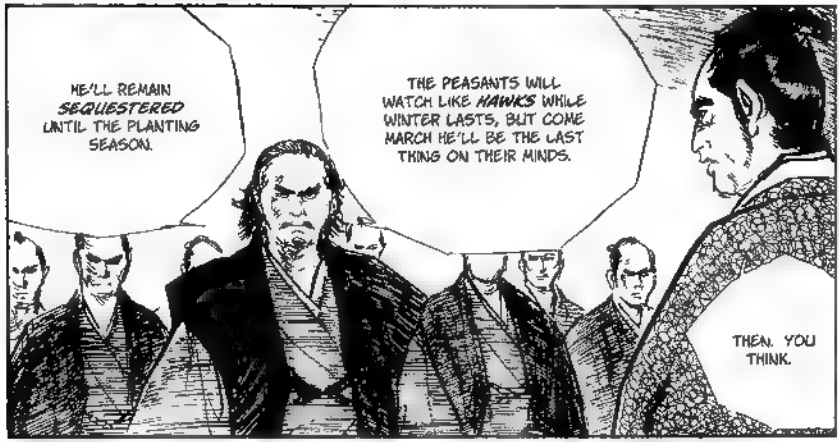

HE ROWED OUT TO GET *MIKAN* ORANGES FOR HIS SON.
A *SQUALL* STRUCK BUT HE MADE T BACK, AND THEN *DISAPPEARED*


PROBABLY *HERE*

GONE TO GROUND IN THE HILLS, I EXPECT
MAYBE WE SENT HIM RUNNING WITH HIS *TAIL* BETWEEN HIS LEGS MAYBE *COLD* AND *HUNGER* WILL TAKE HIM. WHO KNOWS?

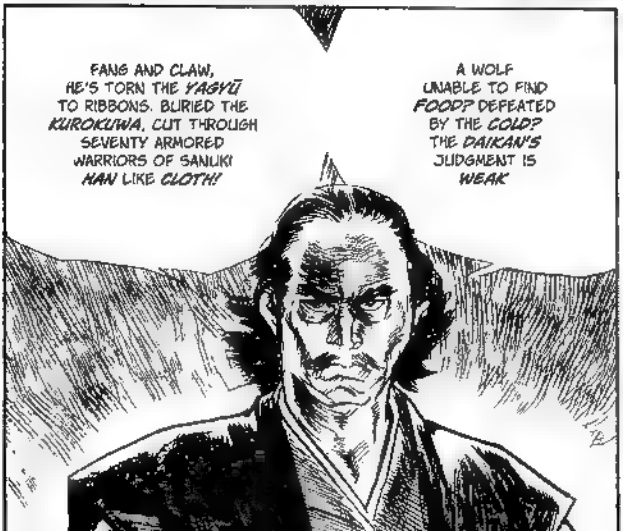
WRONG

LONE WOLF WOULDN'T FEAR *YOU*
MY CONCLUSION? HE CANNOT ENDURE KILLING PEASANTS AND TOWNSPEOPLE DRIVEN *MAD* WITH GREED BY YOUR FIVE THOUSAND *RYŌ* BOUNTY


HE'LL REMAIN *SEQUESTERED* UNTIL THE PLANTING SEASON.
THE PEASANTS WILL WATCH LIKE *HAWKS* WHILE WINTER LASTS, BUT COME MARCH HE'LL BE THE LAST THING ON THEIR MINDS.
THEN. YOU THINK.

HERE .. IN THESE MOUNTAINS.
I KNOW IT!

BUT THERE'S NOTHING UP THERE BUT SNOW NO FOOD!
AND HIM WITH A BOY? THEY CAN'T POSSIBLY LAST UNTIL MARCH.
NO MAN COULD LAST, BUT THEY ARE WOLF AND CUB

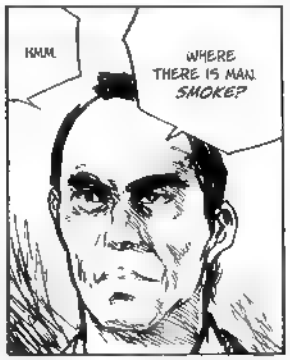

FANG AND CLAW, HE'S TORN THE YAGYŪ TO RIBBONS. BURIED THE KUROKUWA, CUT THROUGH SEVENTY ARMORED WARRIORS OF SANUKI HAN LIKE CLOTH!
A WOLF UNABLE TO FIND FOOD? DEFEATED BY THE COLD? THE DAIKAN'S JUDGMENT IS WEAK

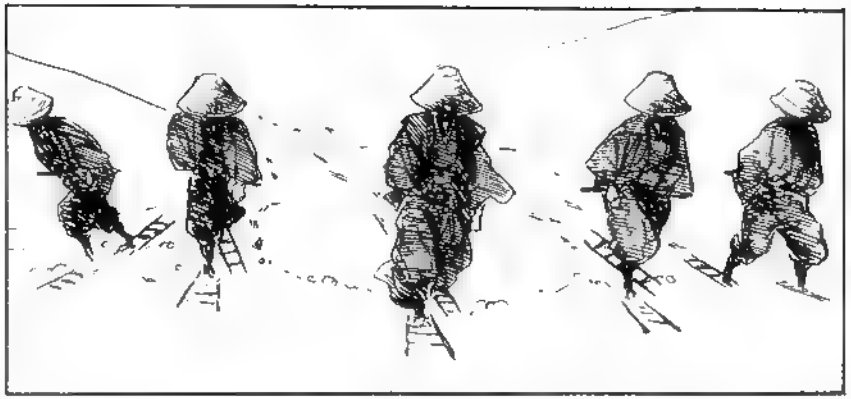
WHA—?

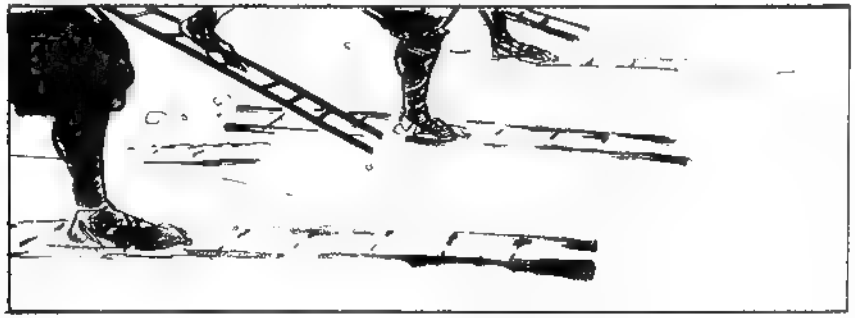
BUT HOW? YOU ARE A MERE HANDFUL OF–
WE ARE FIREWATCHERS!
WHERE THERE'S MAN THERE IS SMOKE

BUT WE CAN'T GO UP THERE. THE SNOW. AVALANCHES.
WE HAVEN'T ENOUGH MEN. OR THE TRAINING.
OF COURSE NOT WE'LL DO IT

NO MATTER HOW FAINT
WE WILL FIND IT AND EXTINGUISH IT!


HMM.
WHERE THERE IS MAN. SMOKE?



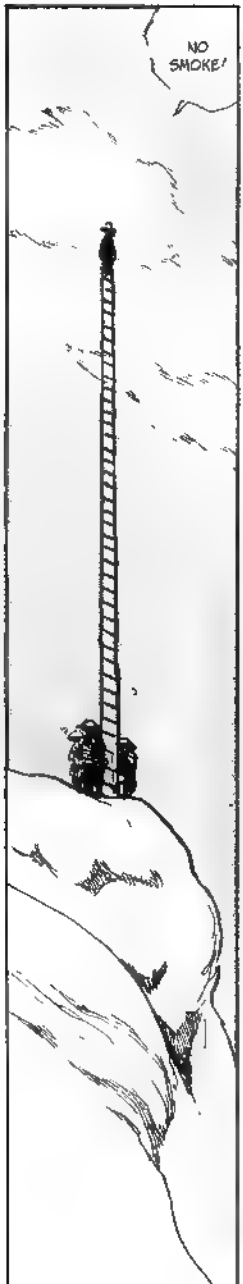


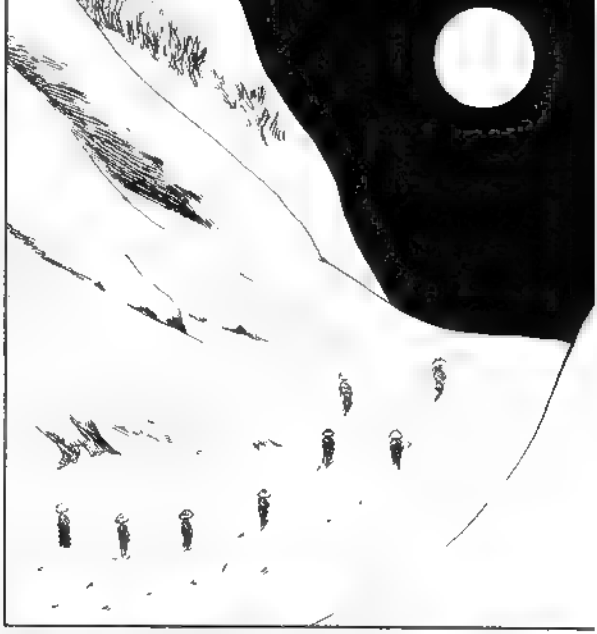
NO SMOKE!

NONE!

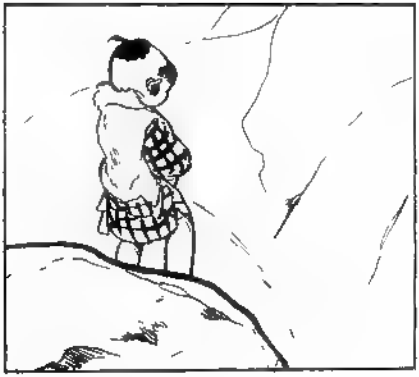
NO SMOKE!

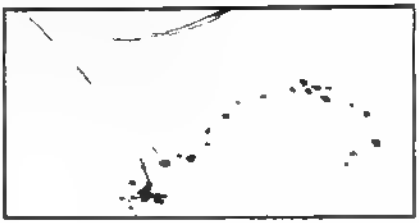
NO SMOKE!


NO SMOKE!

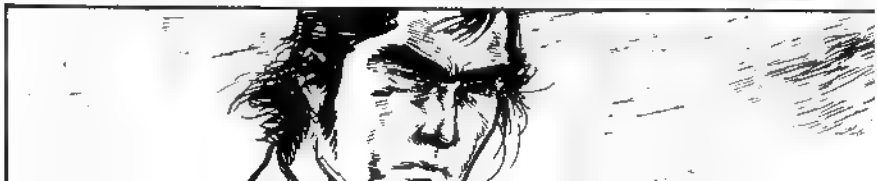


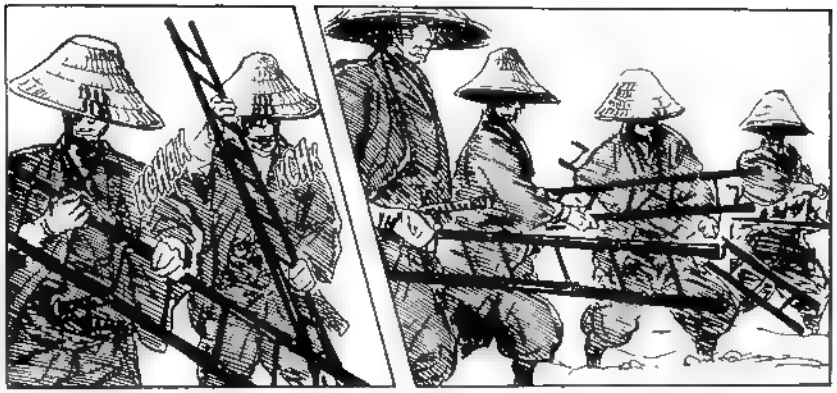
NO SMOKE!
NO FIRE!





PAPA





BLACK LADDERS. ARE YOU *FIREWATCHERS?*
WOLF WATCHERS! PREPARE TO DIE, *ŌGAMI ITTŌ.*

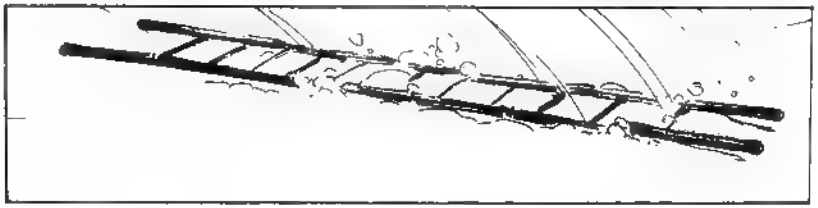
THE *SHŌGUN'S BODYGUARDS?* LEASHED AS HUNTING DOGS FOR THE *YAGYŪ?!*

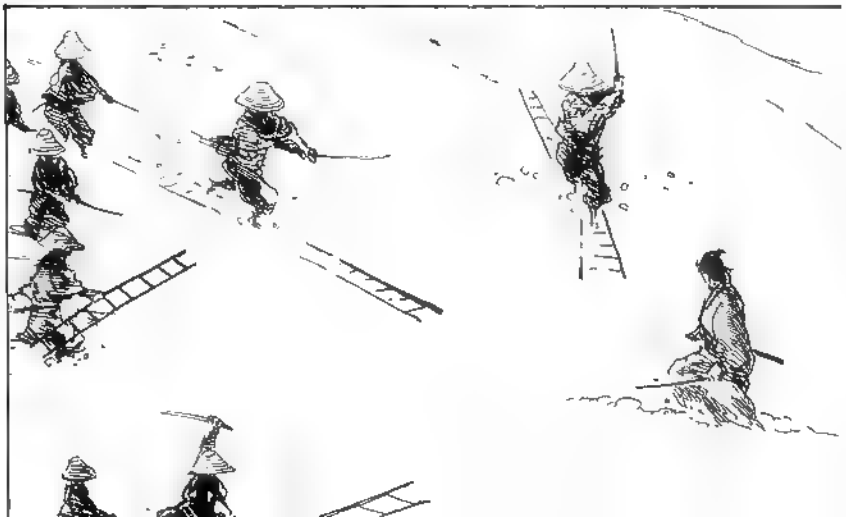
FIGHT!

YOUR *SUIŌ-RYŪ* BROKE THE *YAGYŪ* AND BURIED THE *KUROKUWA*. YOUR *SWORD* STANDS ABOVE ALL OTHERS. BUT NOT MIRED IN *SNOW!*

OUR *HASHIGO-RYŪ* GOES *EVERY-WHERE!* SNOW! SAND! SWAMP!

THOUGH MERE *ASHIGARA*, *WE* SHALL DEFEAT YOU! *OUR* SWORDS, *UNRIVALED* THROUGH-OUT JAPAN! WE DON'T KILL FOR THE *YAGYŪ!* WE KILL FOR *HONOR!* FOR OUR *FUTURE!*

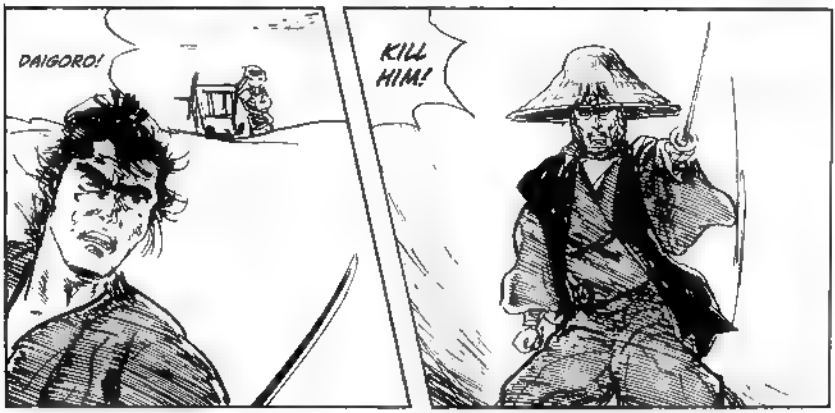


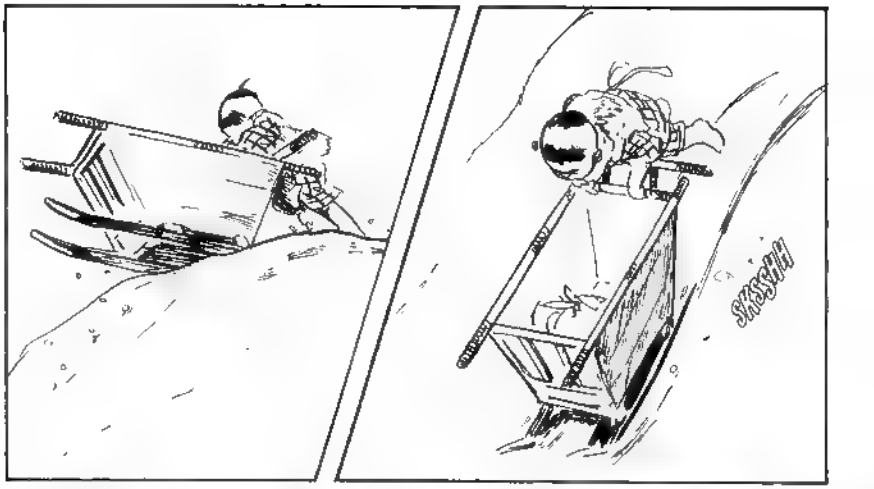


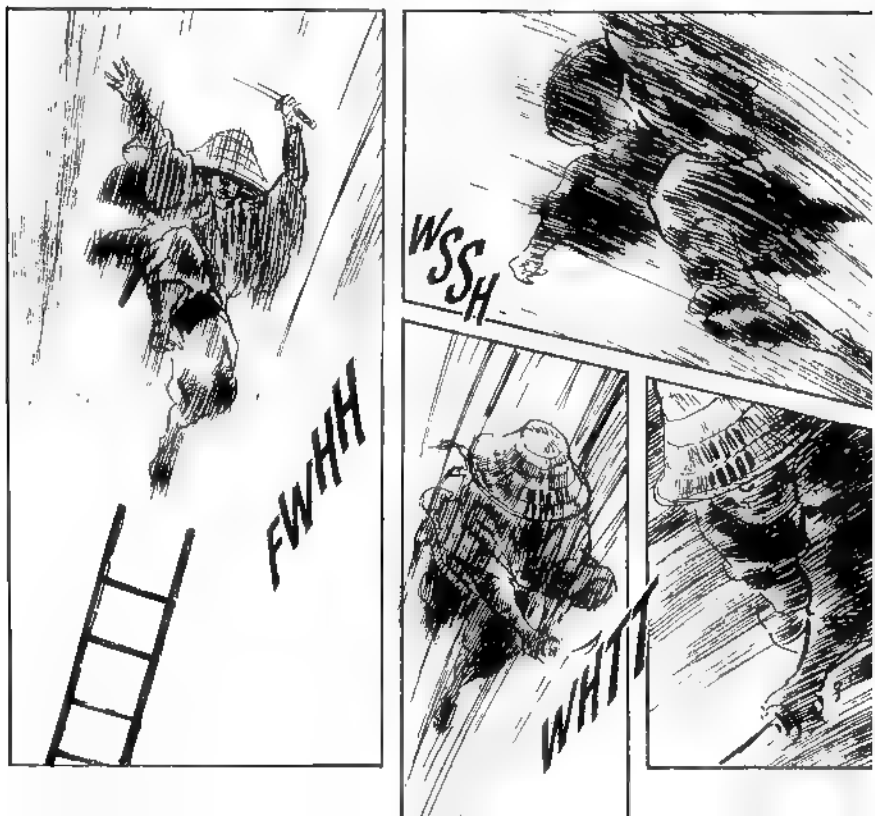
SKSSH
CHOKK

RYAA!
HYAA!

SKUSSH
WHIT
WHD

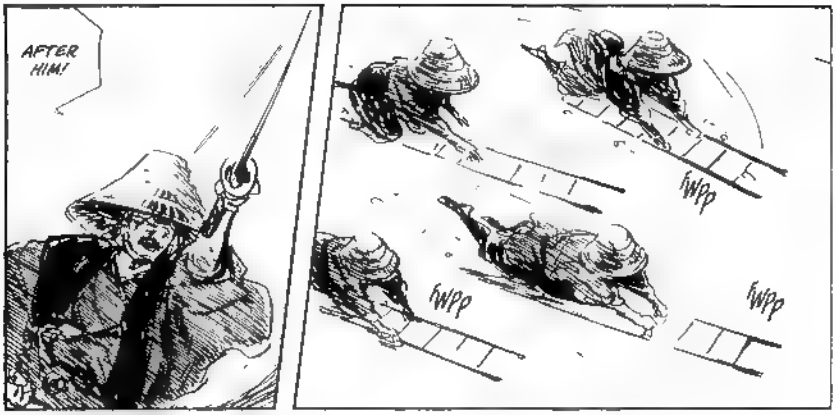

DAIGORO!
KILL HIM!

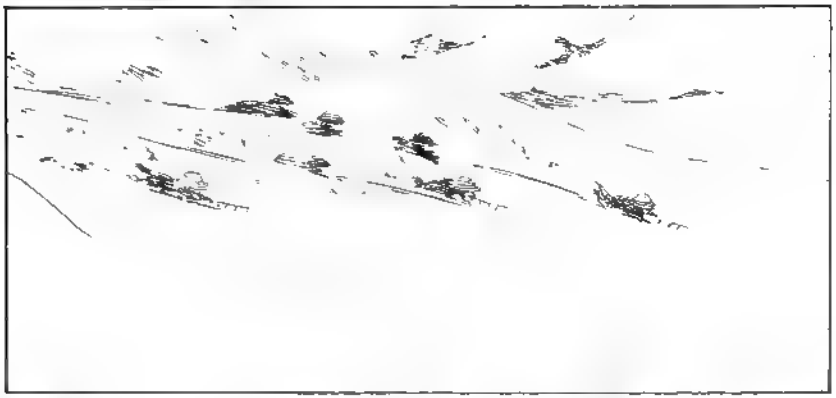

SHSSHH


FWHH
WSSH
WHTT

SKITT
SHUKK

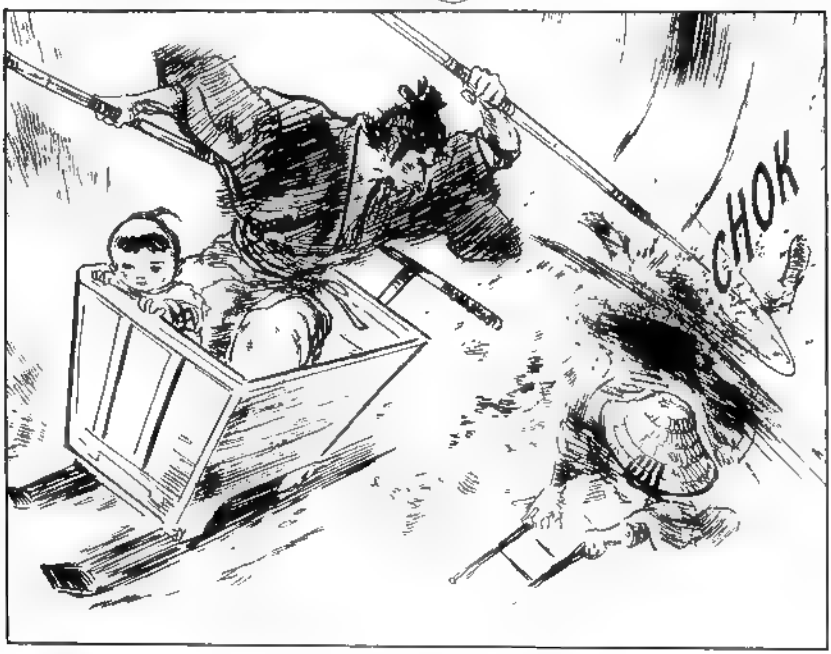
SKSSSHH


AFTER HIM!
fwpp
fwpp
fwpp



SHHSSS

SHINGG


CHOK

IF HE GOES BY LAND, HE'LL HAVE TO KILL COMMONERS
HE'LL HEAD FOR EDO BY SEA.

NIHAMA'S THE CLOSEST BEACH. WE'LL TAKE SHORTCUTS DOWN THE COAST LIE IN WAIT

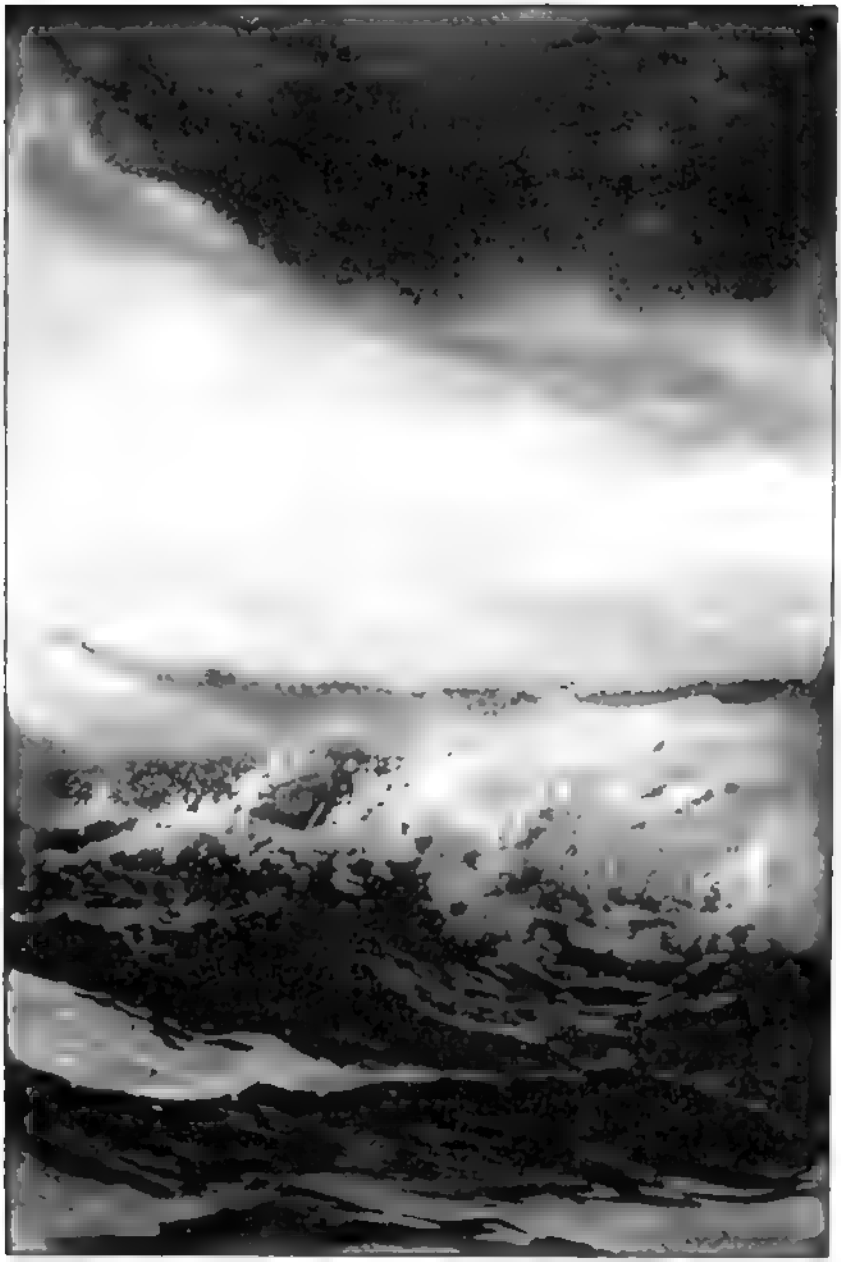
HE TRAVELS TO EDO!
HIS SEEKS THE YAGYŪ! HE CAN'T ELUDE US!

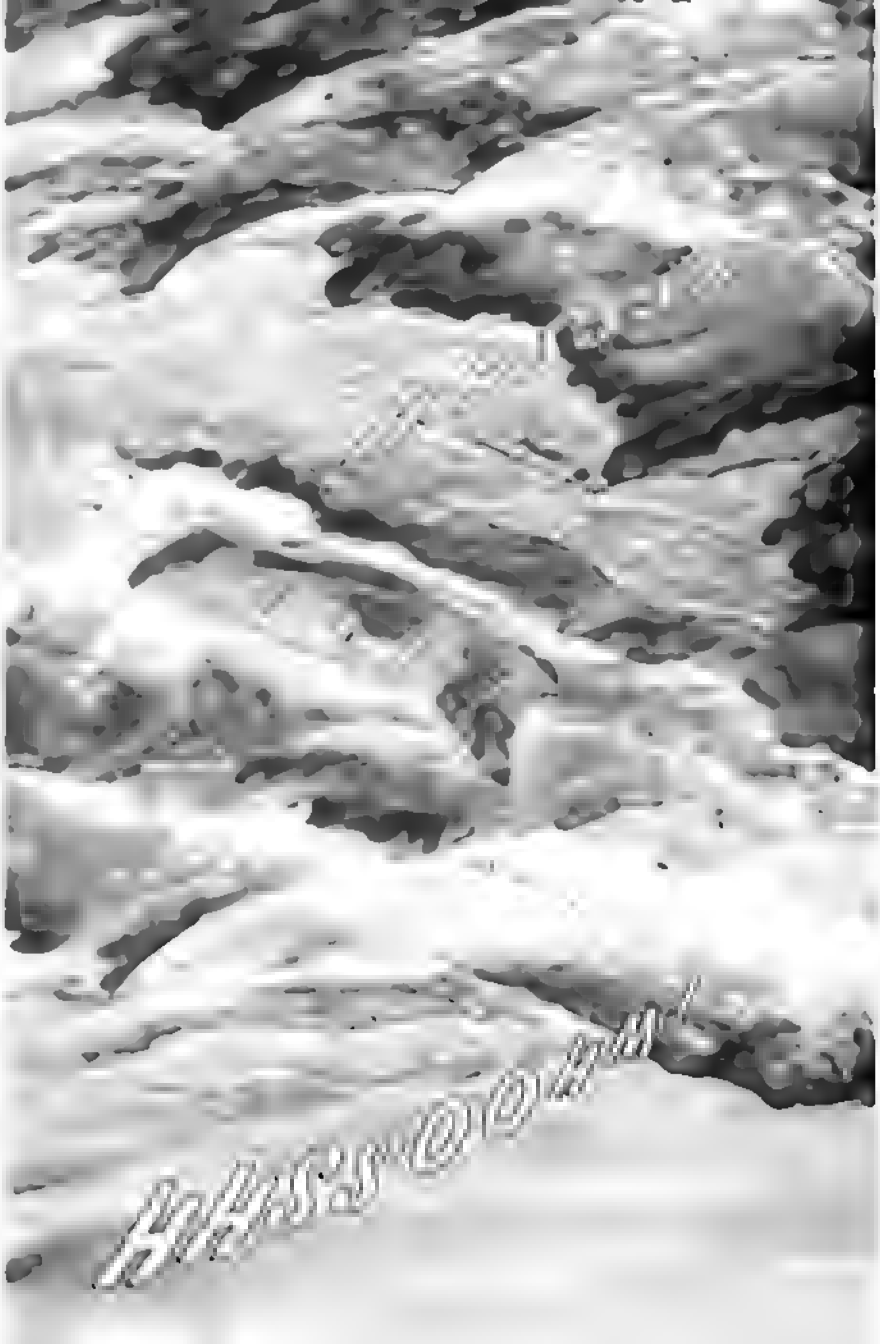
AND YET
HE IS ŌGAMI ITTŌ...

#MangaProject on irc.Dal.net
Lone Wolf and Cub

the eighty-ninth

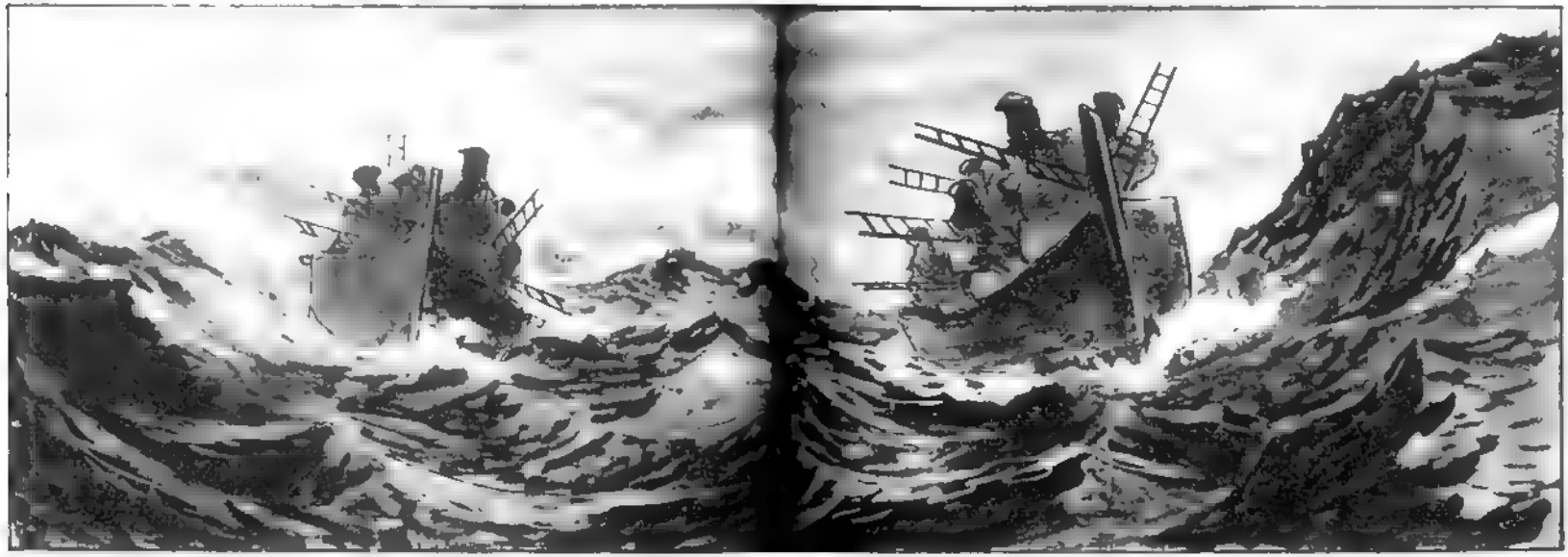
The Immortal Fire Watchers

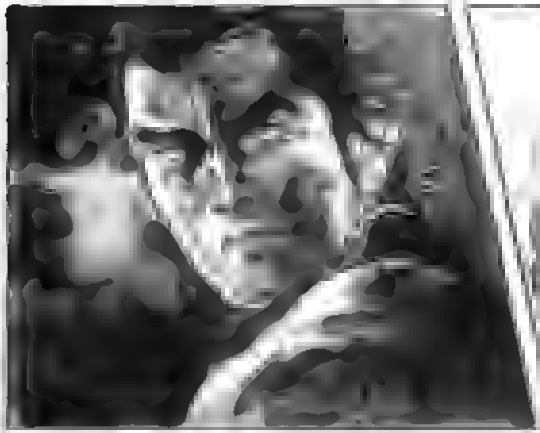


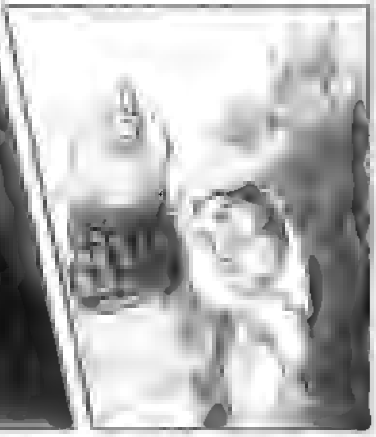

Hans's Dream

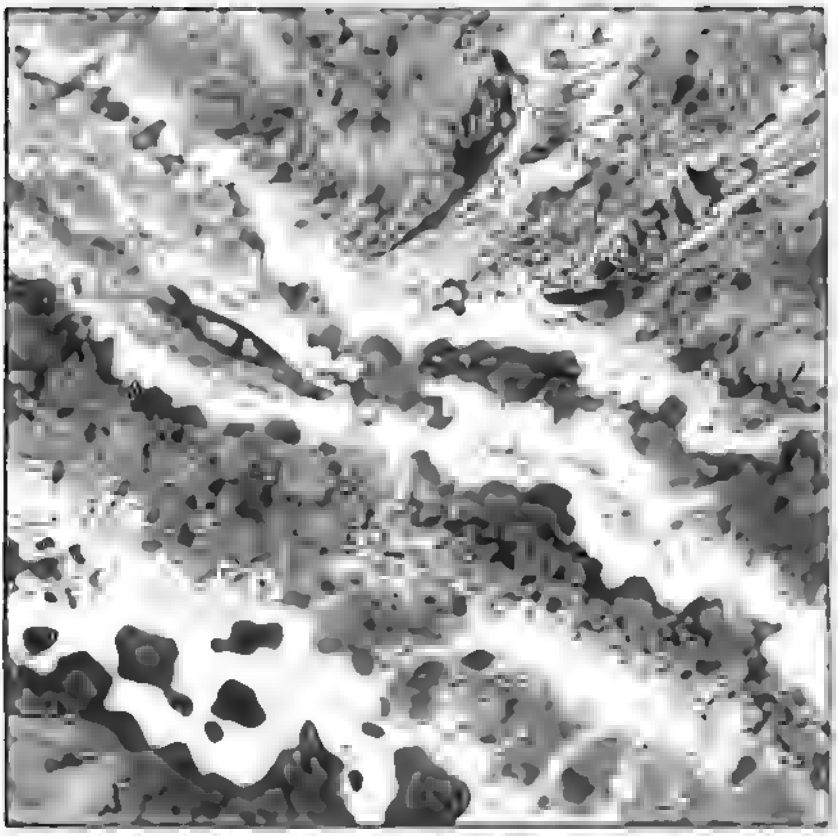
WHSSHH
WHHSSSSSHHH

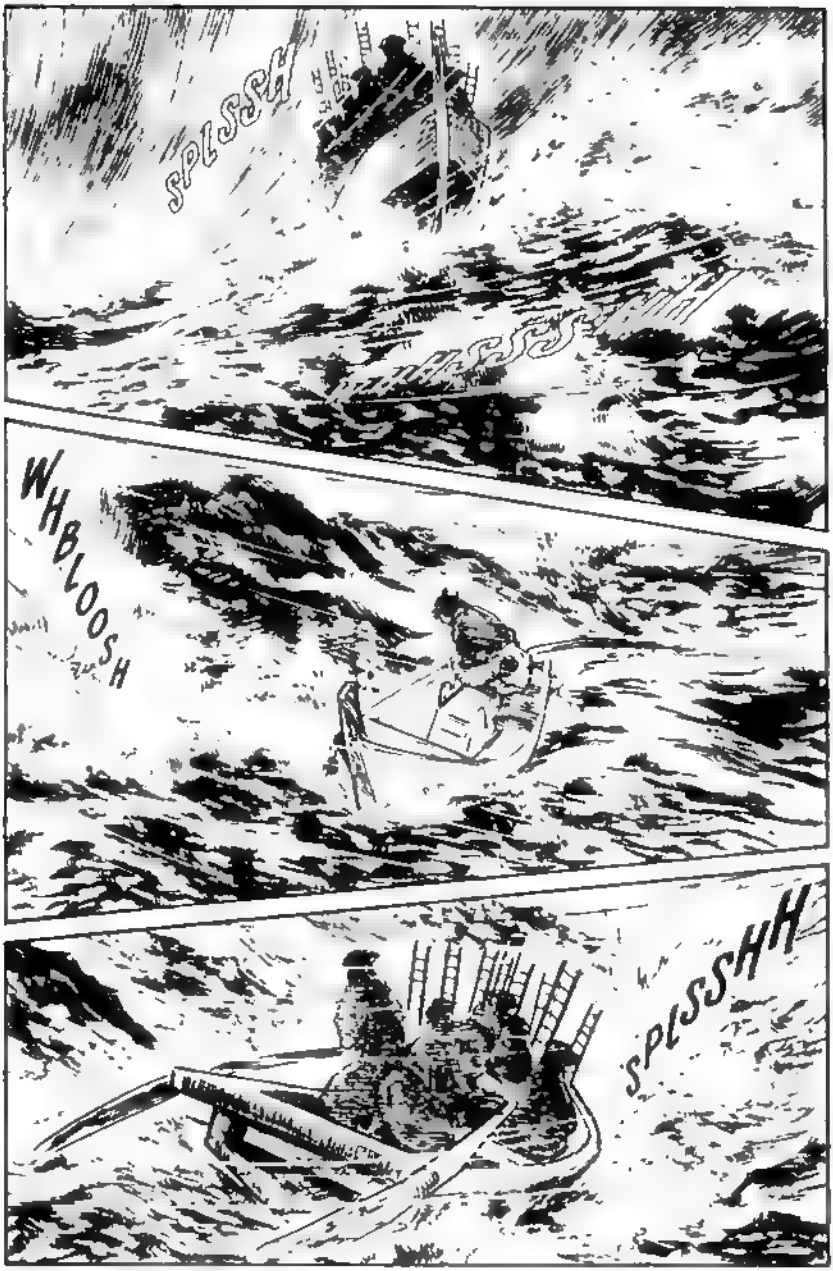
CRASH!!

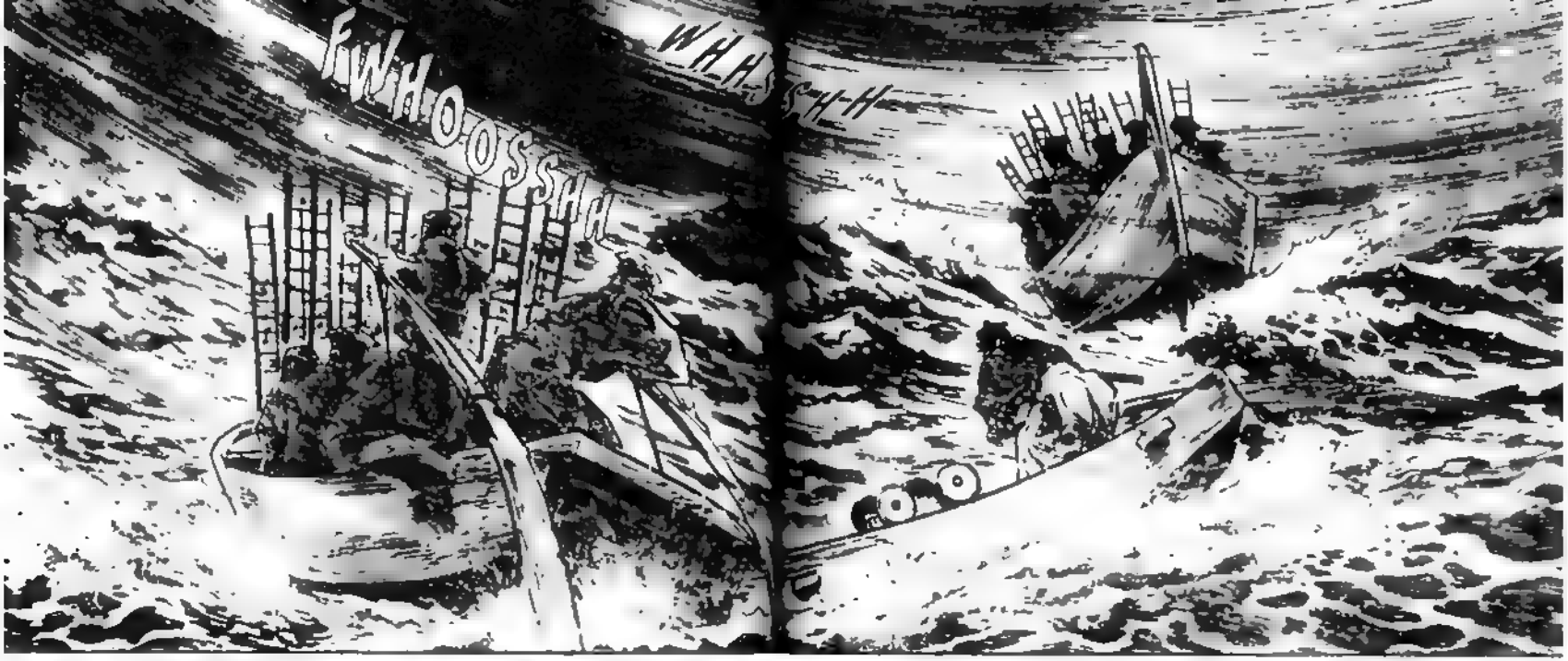






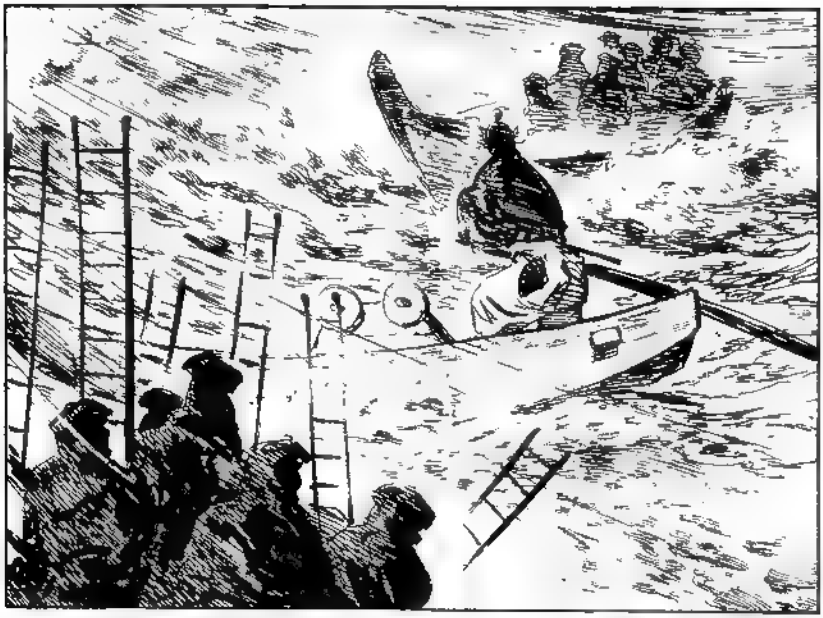


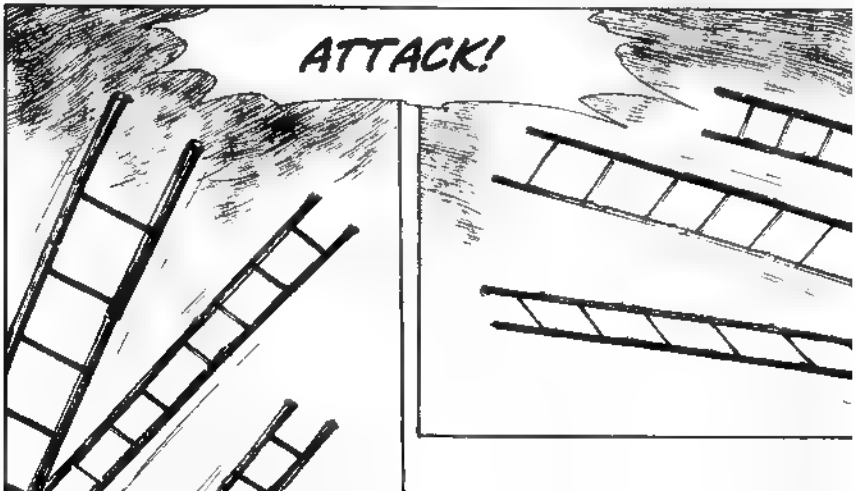

SPLSSH
WHBLOOSH
SPLSSHH

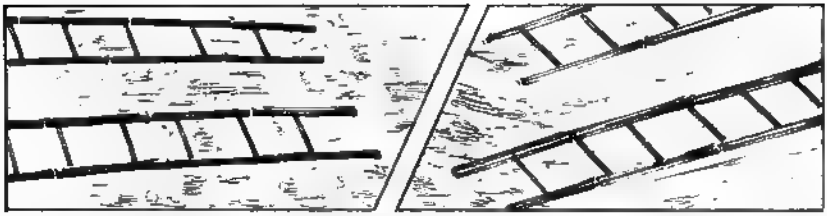

WHOOSSHH
WHH
SH-H

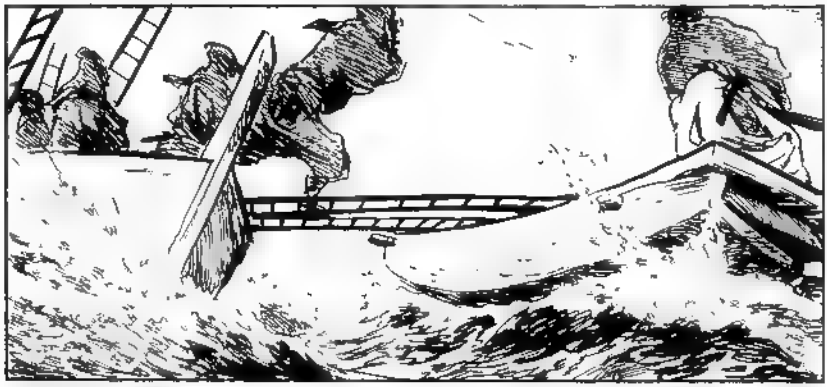
I KNEW YOU'D GO BY SEA FROM LAHAINA. THE TRAP IS SET!

MEAN GO FORTH!
IN THE NAME OF THE FIREWATCHERS SEND HIM TO THE BOTTOM WITH THE SHELLS AND SEAWEED!
KRLOOSH




ATTACK!



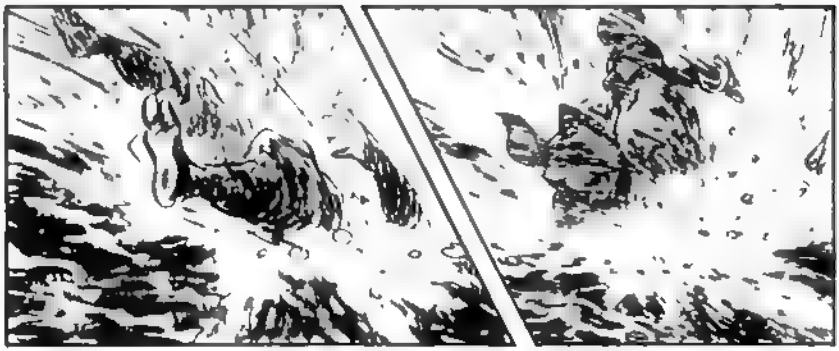


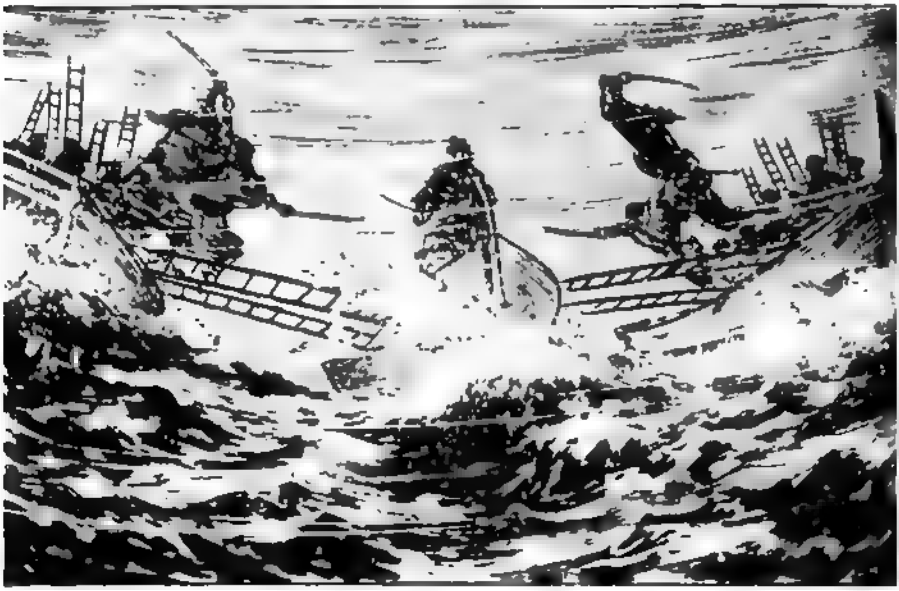
THAK THAK

THAKKA

SKCCH

SKRSSH

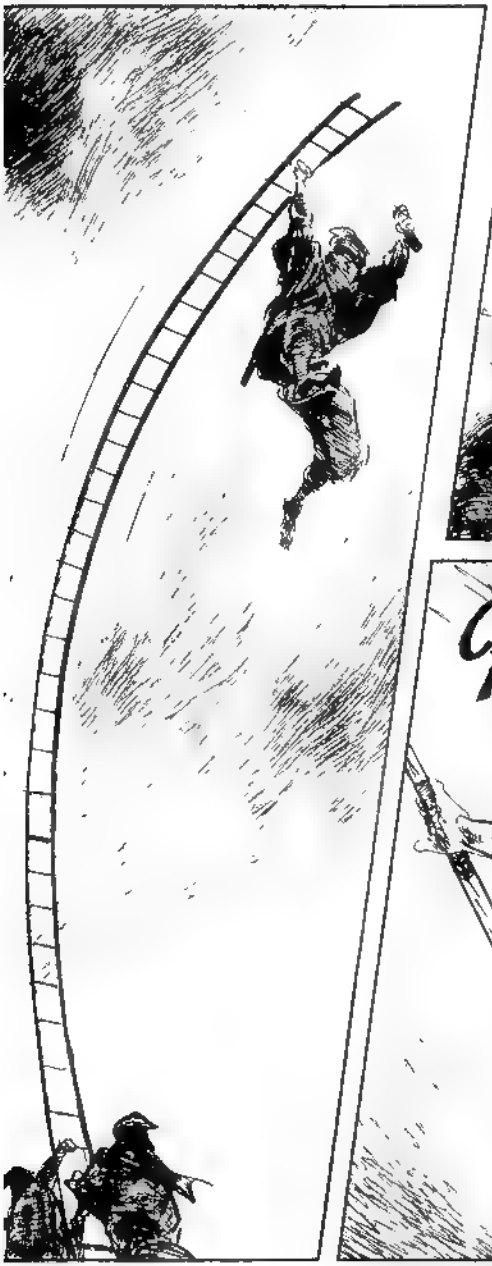




GCHOK
SKRSSH
SSSI

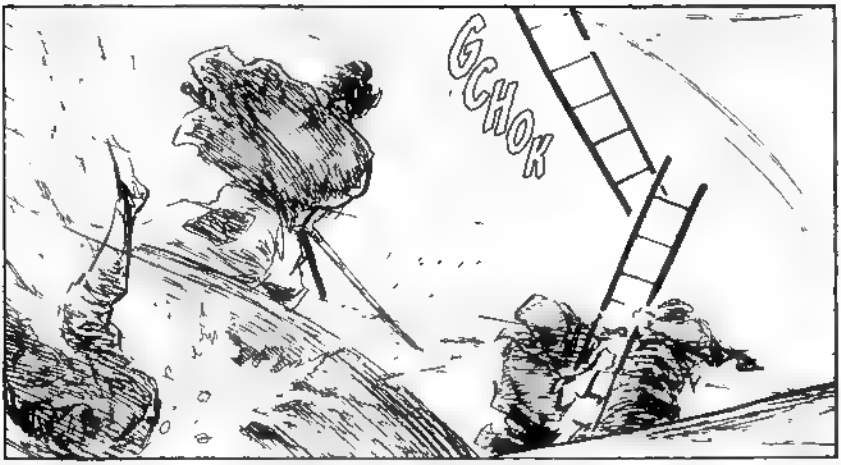
KCHAK
FWTT
WHTT
WHTT
WHTT
SISSHH
FWHT
CHOK

KCHAK
KCHAK



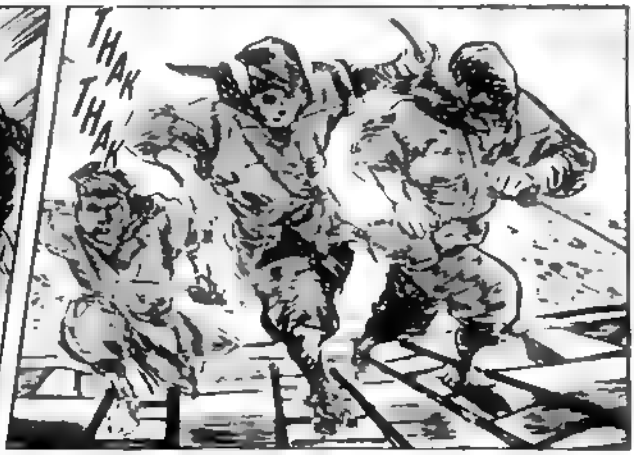
WHSSH

CHOK


GCHOK

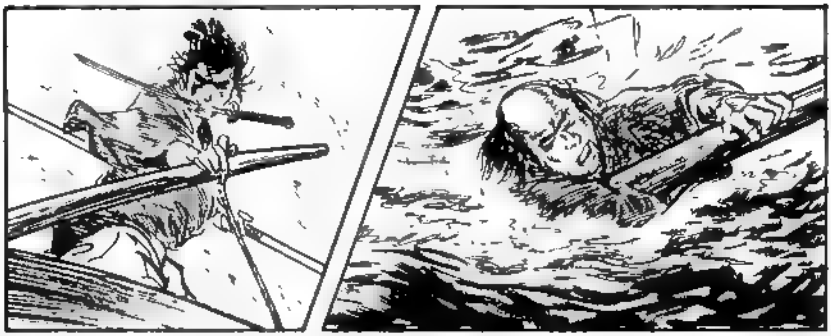
GLCCH
WWAAA!

SKRUSSH

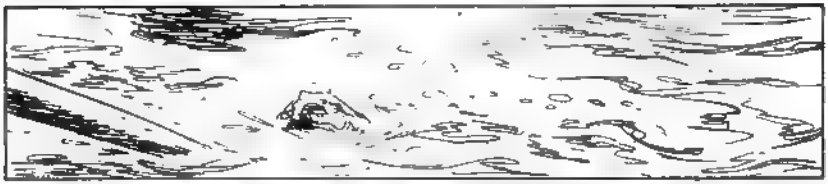

THAK
THAK

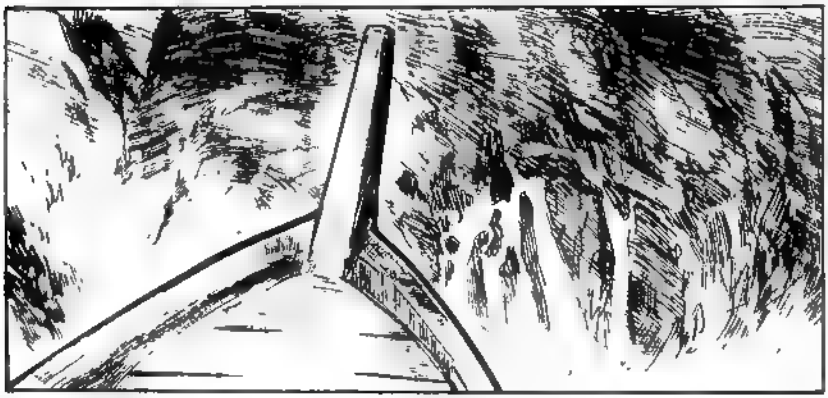
CHUKK

WRAMM
SKRAKK



CHINK



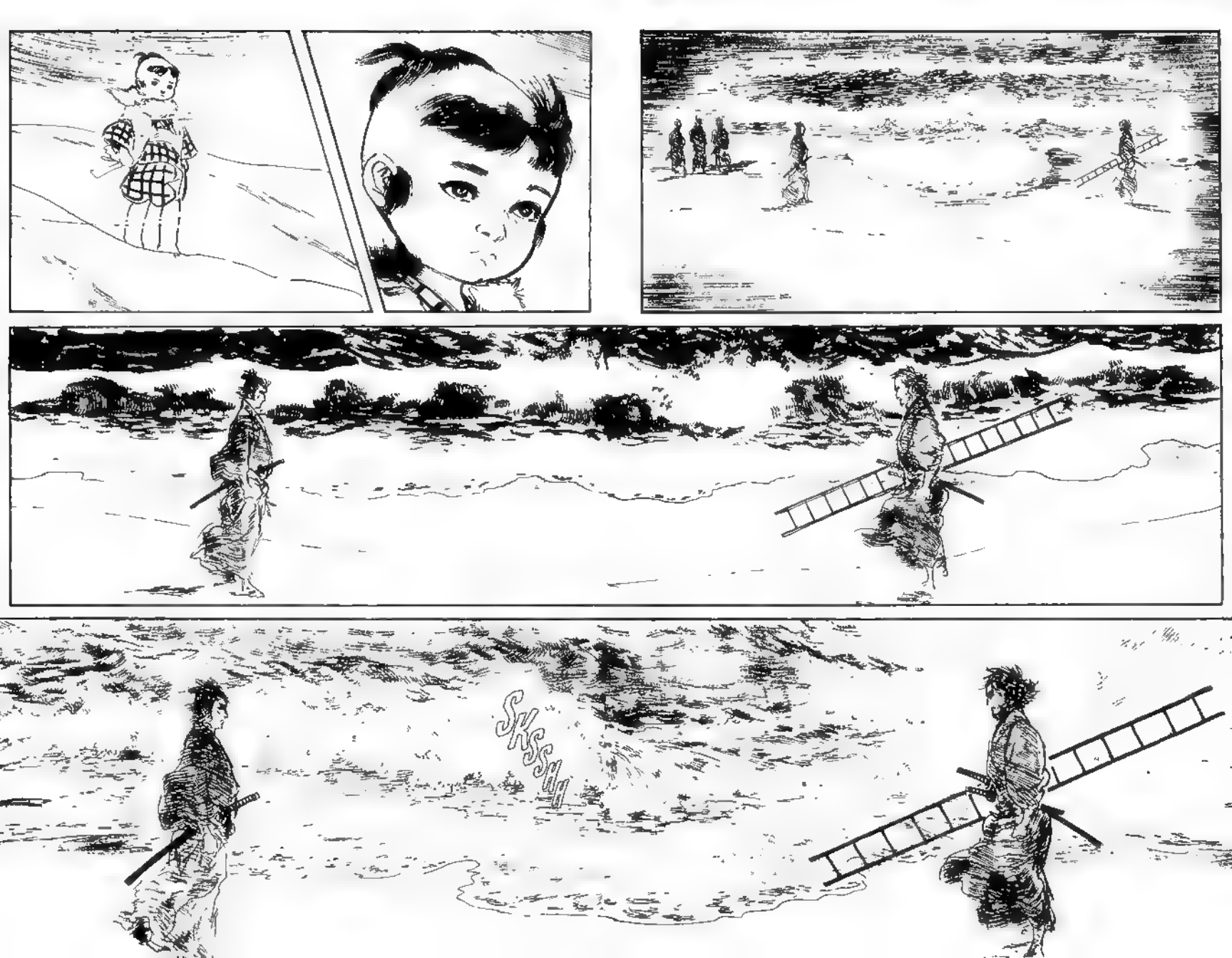


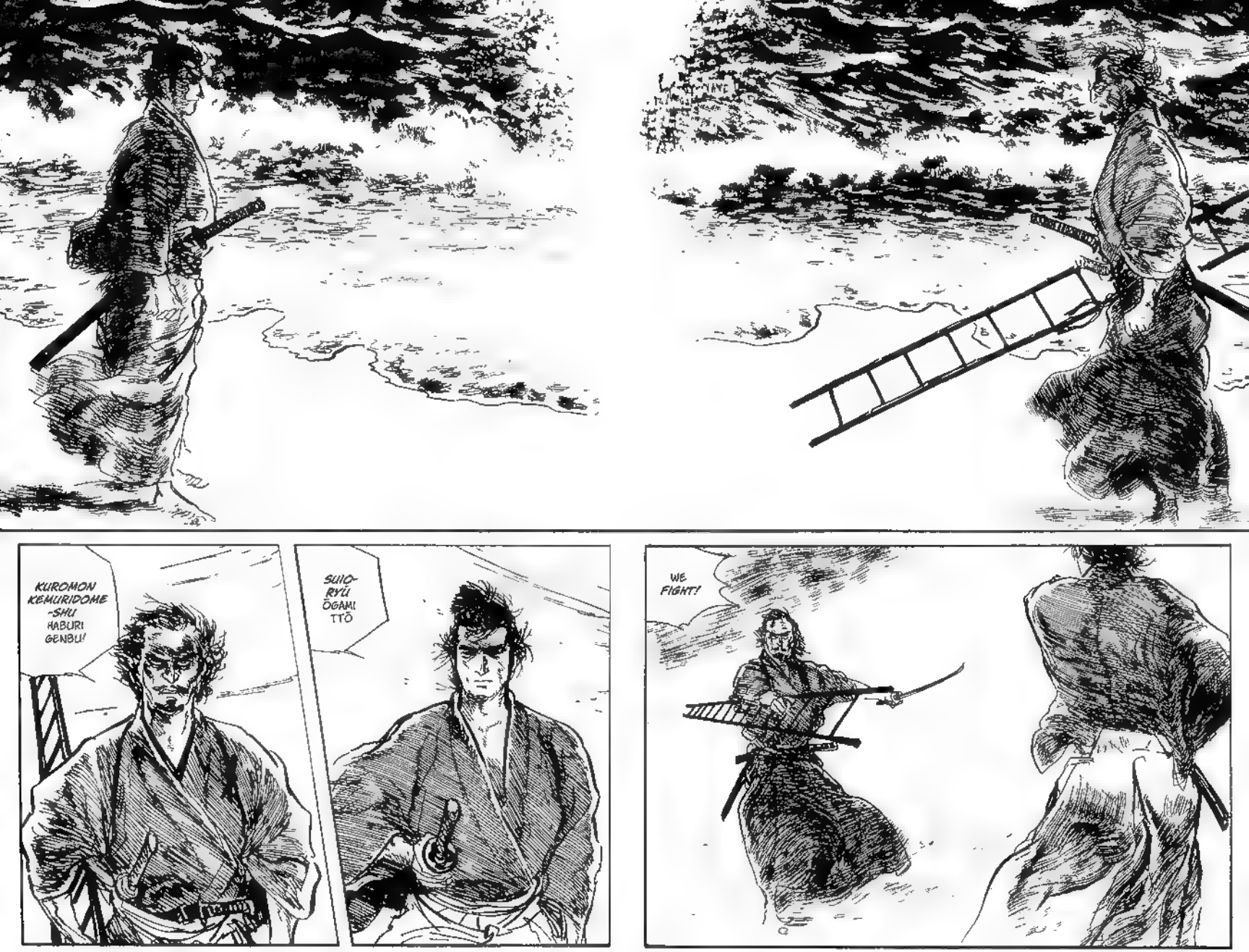
ITTŌ!

ŌGAMI

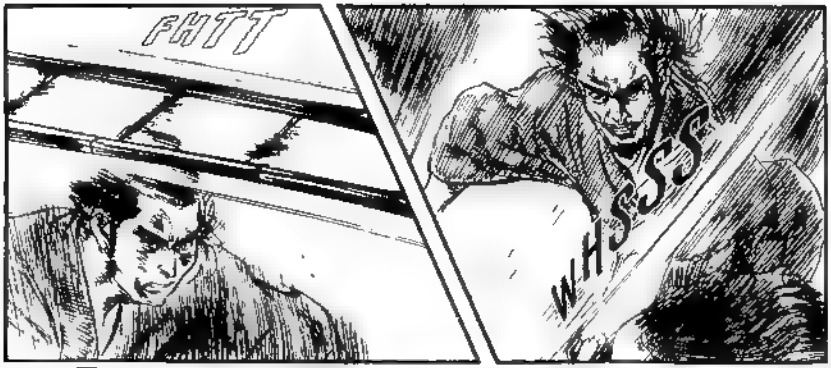
ASHIGARA! YET STILL SAMURAI!

DONE!

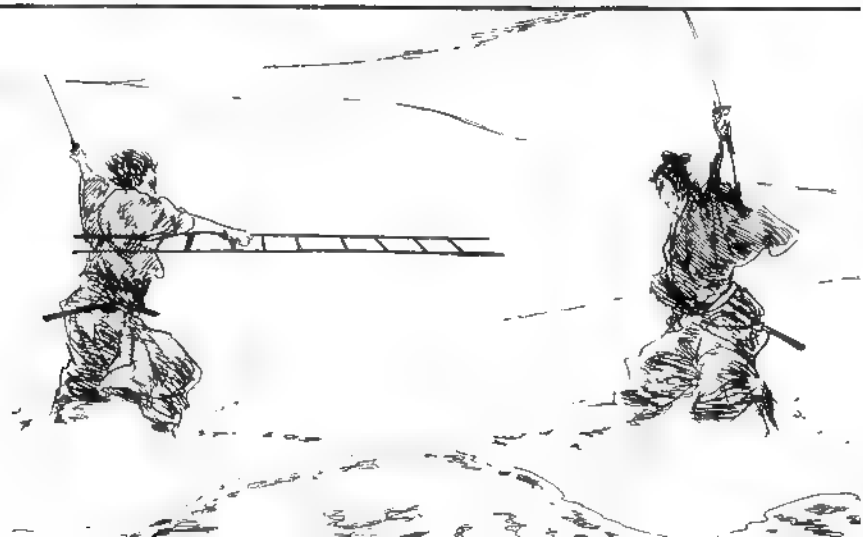

SKSSH


KUROMON KEMURIDOME -SHU HABURI GENBU!
SUIO-RYÜ ÖGAMI TTÔ
WE FIGHT!

SKSSH

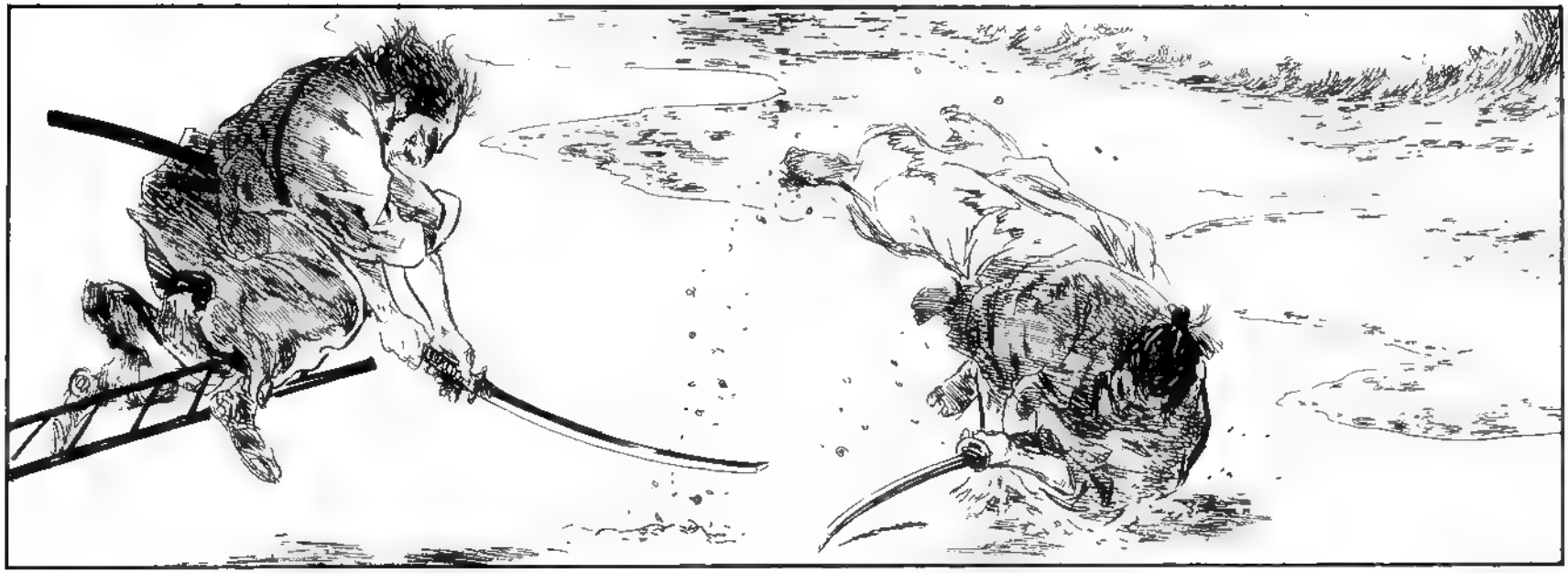

FHTT
WHSSS

KTANGG



WCHOK

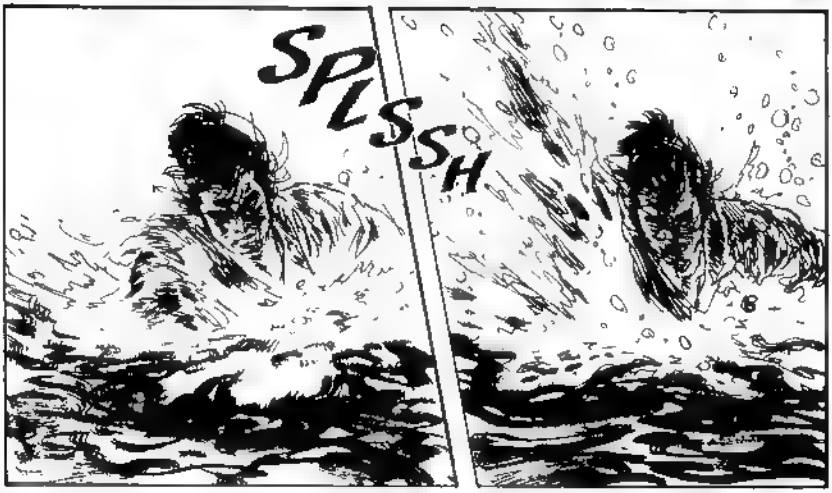
TILOKS



KBLOOY

SPASSHH

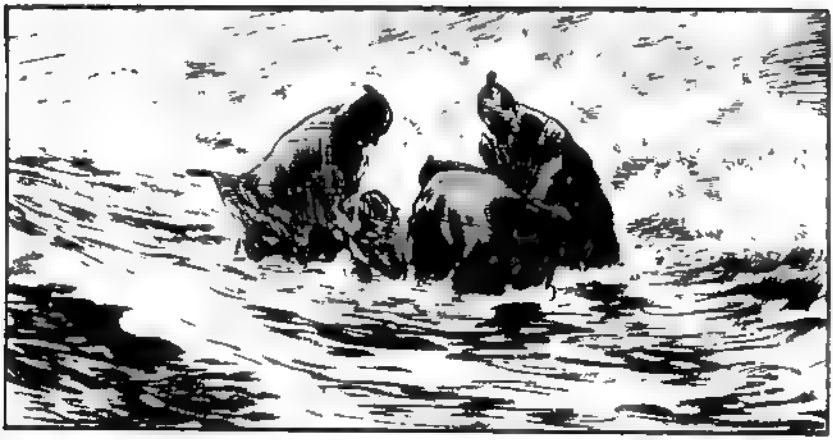
RRGH! THE SUIŌ WAVE-SLICING STROKE!

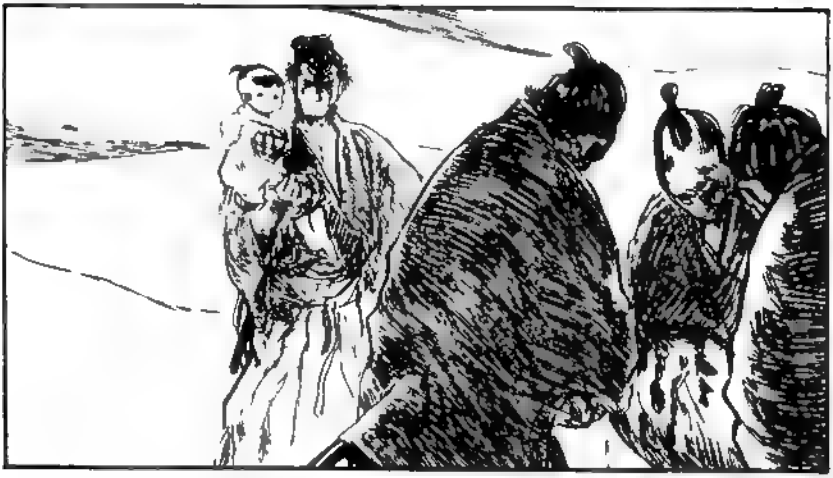

SPLSSH

BLSSH

SLC
CHHH

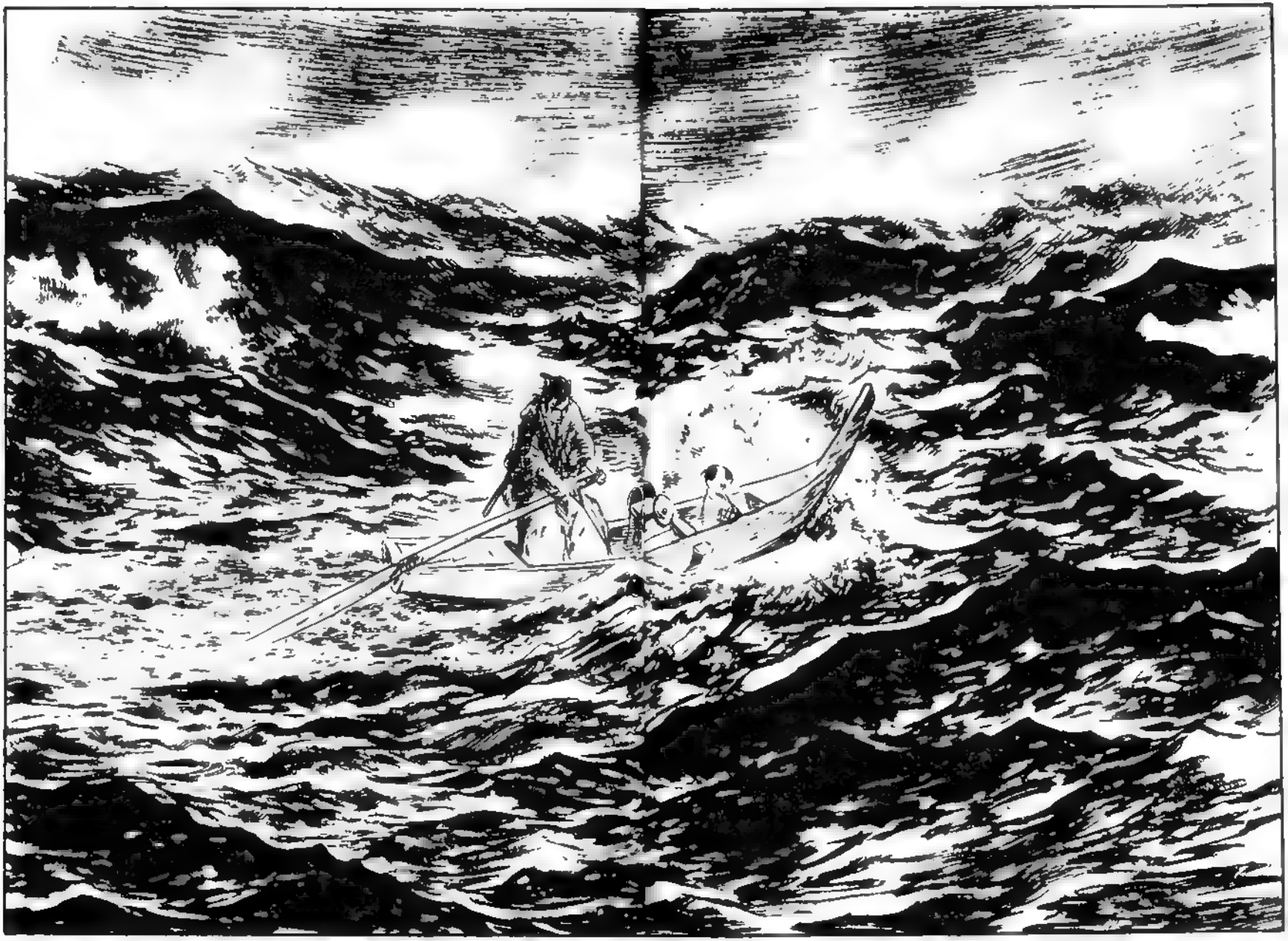
Y-YOUR SHORT SWORD?!
SPLSH

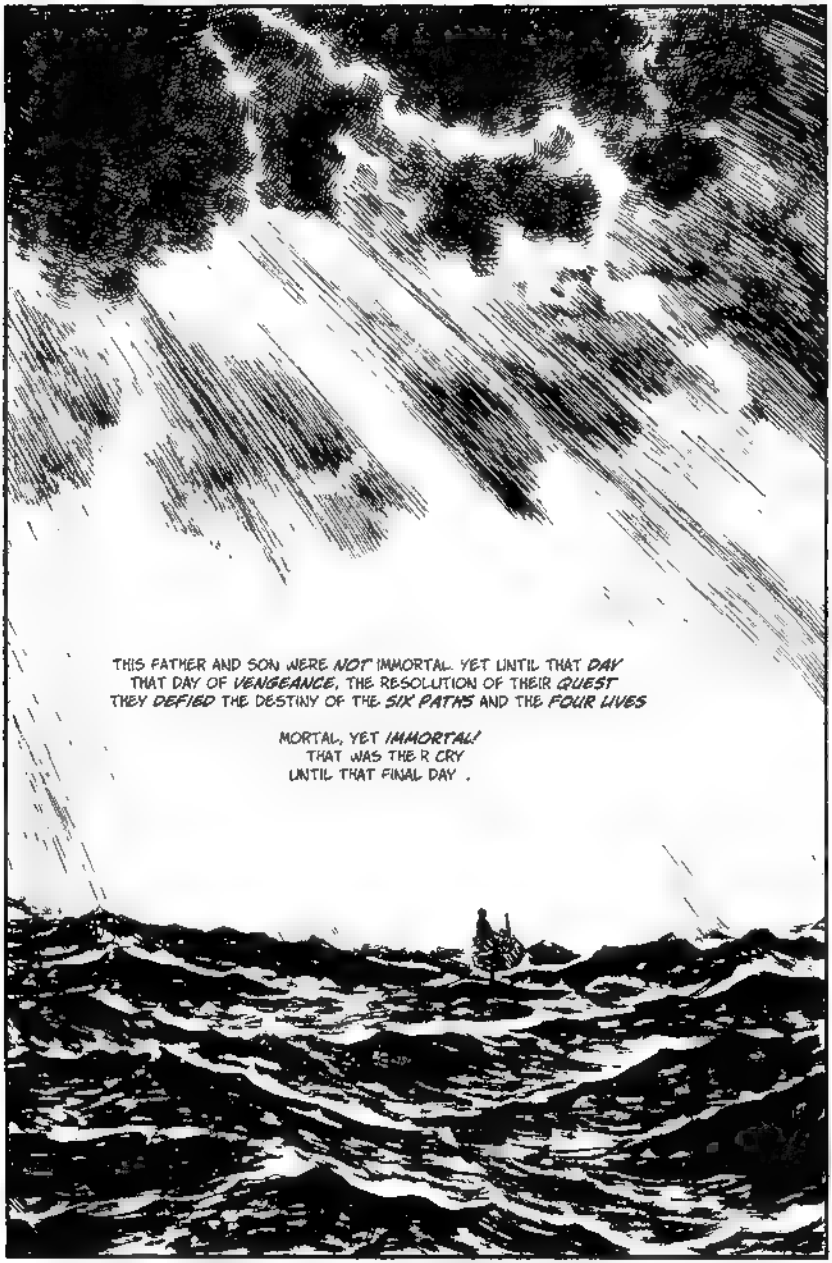


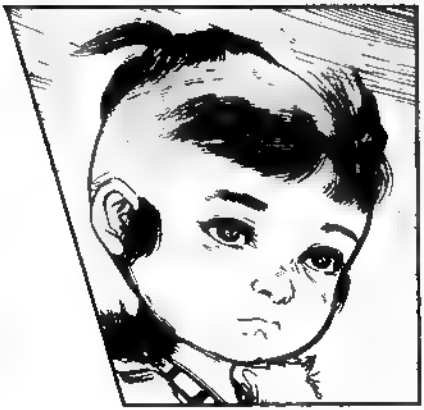


FIREWATCHERS ARE BUSHI—LIVING FOR BUSHIDŌ DYING FOR BUSHIDŌ. IMMORTAL IS THE BUSHI! WE SHALL MEET AGAIN.
IF YOU, TOO, ARE IMMORTAL.

WE ARE BUT MORTALS.




THIS FATHER AND SON WERE *NOT* IMMORTAL. YET UNTIL THAT *DAY*
THAT DAY OF *VENGEANCE*, THE RESOLUTION OF THEIR *QUEST*
THEY *DEFIED* THE DESTINY OF THE *SIX PATHS* AND THE *FOUR LIVES*
MORTAL, YET *IMMORTAL!*
THAT WAS THE R CRY
UNTIL THAT FINAL DAY .



#MangaProject on irc.Dal.net
Lone Wolf and Cub

the ninetieth

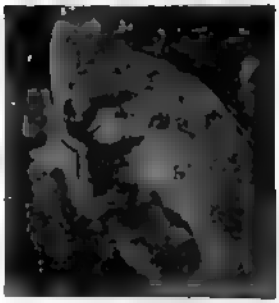
Paper Money

津田代官所

SO, ŌGAMI ITTŌ MASSACRED ALL BUT THREE OF THE KIMURADOMO SAKI AND KILLED HABURI GENBU?
YES, SIR

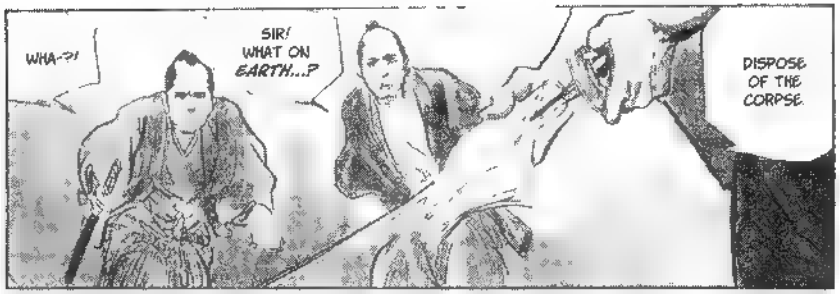
WE BELIEVE HE'S FOLLOWING THE COASTLINE TO EDO BY BOAT
I GO TO WARN THE YAGYŪ, BUT I'M ALERTING THE COASTAL DAIKANSHO ALONG THE WAY

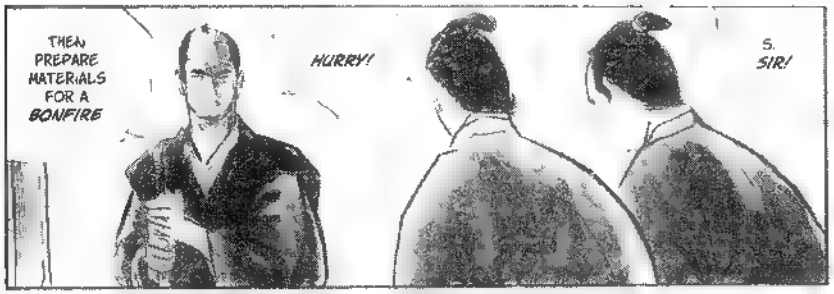
HIM. EDO BY BOAT
HE SHOULD REACH TSUDA WATERS BY TONIGHT

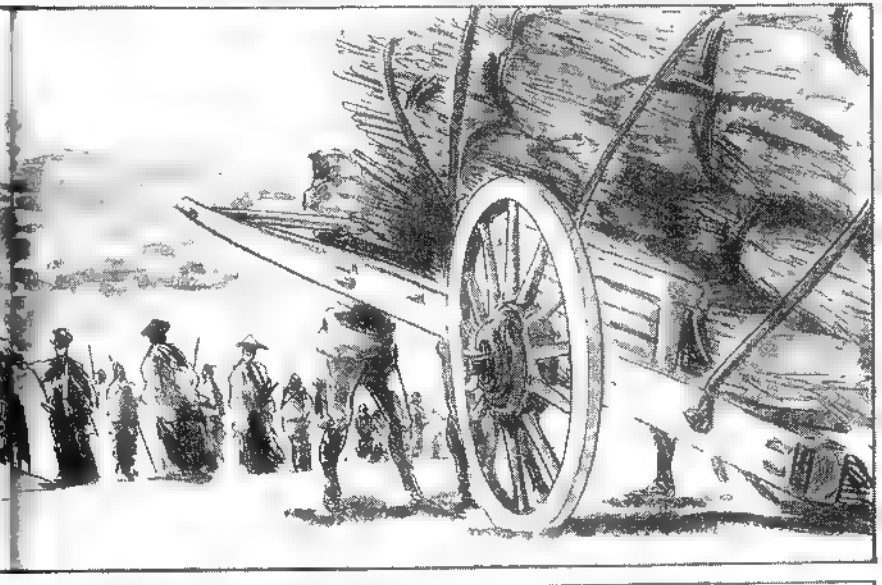


GOOD WORK
TELL YAGYŪ-SAMA THE TSUDA DAIKANSHO IS FULLY PREPARED
THEN I'LL TAKE MY LEAVE

SKASSH

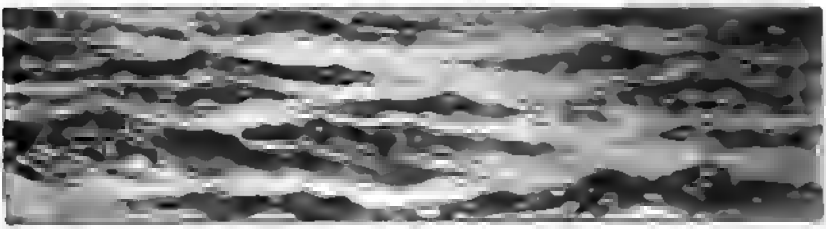

WHA-?!
SIR! WHAT ON EARTH...?
DISPOSE OF THE CORPSE.


THEN PREPARE MATERIALS FOR A BONFIRE
HURRY!
S. SIR!



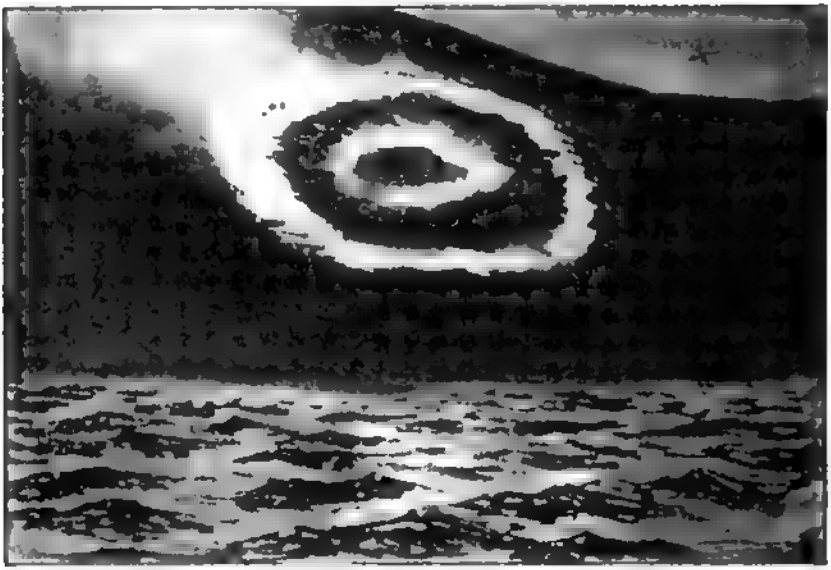
I WANT A FIRE ON THE SLOPE OF THIS DUNE, SHAPED LIKE THIS.

KEEP IT BURNING ALL NIGHT IF NEEDED!
Y-YES, SIR!



FWSSH
KRAK
KRAKK

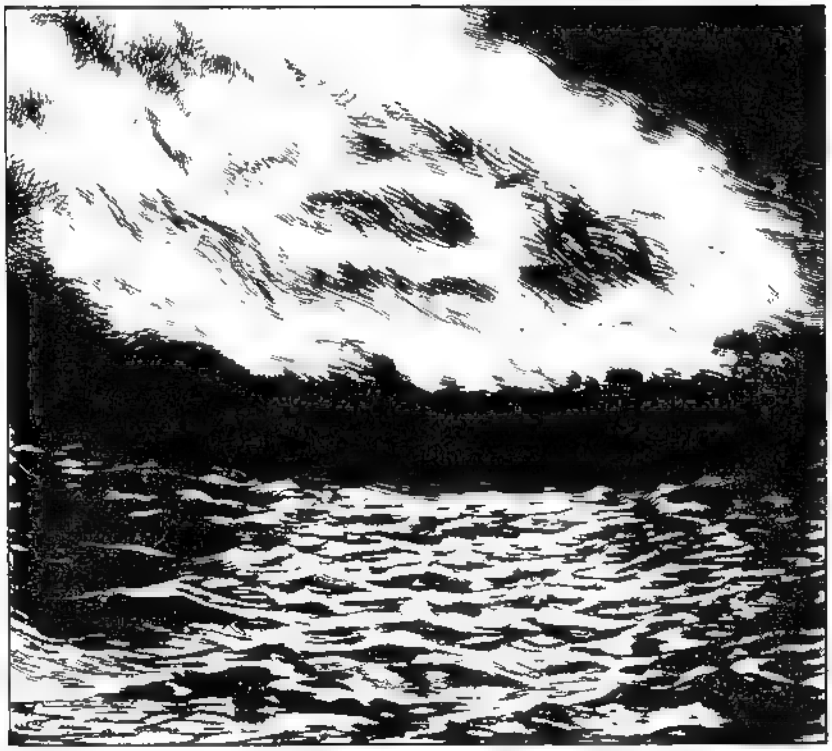
THEY SAY IF YOU LEAVE THE TRAIL MARKER FOR BACKPACKERS LONE WOLF AND CUB FINDS HIS WAY TO YOU ONLY RUMOR ?



WILL HE READ THIS FIRE AS A *TRAP* OR AS THE *HEART* OF ONE DESPERATE TO MEET HIM?
BY HIS *CHOICE* SHALL I KNOW HIM.

IF HE TRULY LIVES IN *MEIFUMADŌ*, AT THE JUNCTION OF THE SIX WAYS AND THE FOUR LIVES, HE'LL STEER FOR THE BECKONING *FLAMES*.
I BELIEVE HE *WILL* AND ONLY ONE WHO CHOOSES *FIRE* CAN UNDERSTAND MY AGONY.

COME, LONE WOLF AND CUB! THIS FIRE IS NO TRAP—IT'S THE HEART OF THE PEASANTS OF ALL TSUDA!
COME TO US!
COME, LONE WOLF! HEAR OUR PLEA!

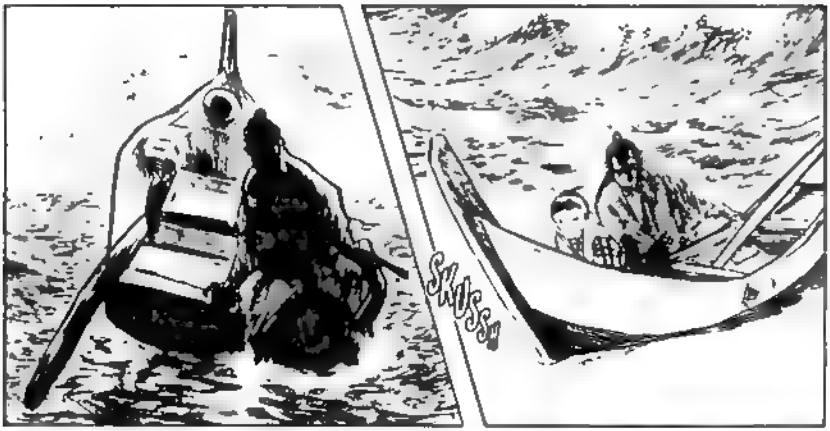


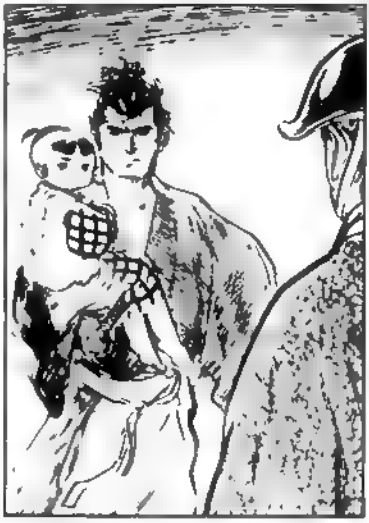
SKSSH

KRRRK

AHH!!

SKRSSH


SWISS



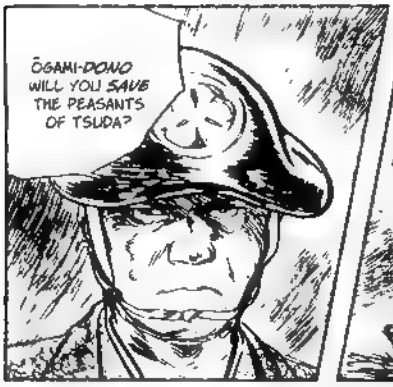
A TRAIL MARKER OF *FIRE* YOU SUMMON ME?

INDEED. YAMAJI UKON, *DAIKAN* OF TSUDA TERRITORY

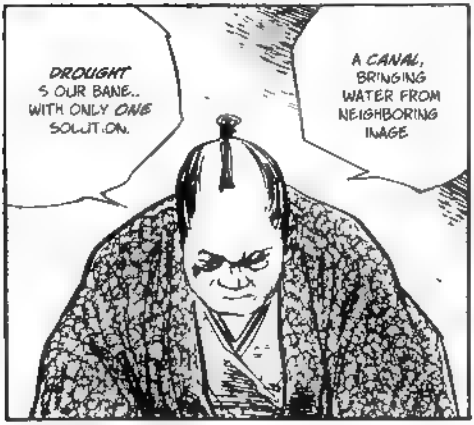
ŌSAMI ITTŌ MY SON, DAIGORO. YOUR INTENT ?

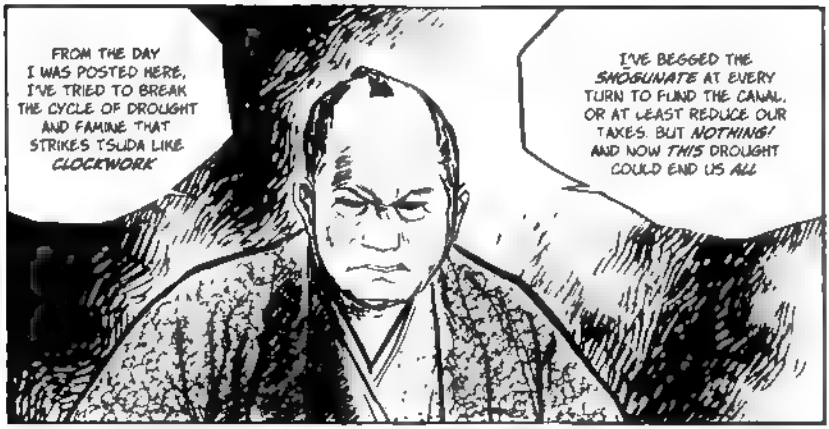
IF YOU MEAN TO *ARREST* US, WE'LL *FIGHT*

NO, WE ARE NOT YOUR *PURSUERS* I WANTED TO *CONSULT* AND SO, TRUSTING IN THE GODS, I BUILT THIS FIRE.

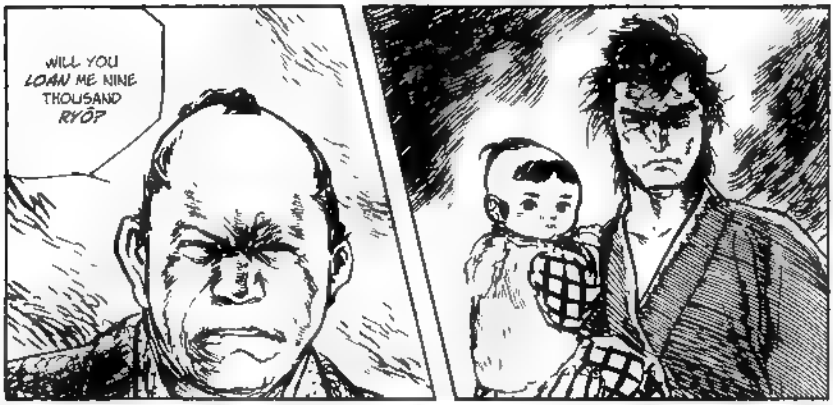

ŌGAMI-DONO WILL YOU SAVE THE PEASANTS OF TSUDA?

THE HARVESTS HAVE FAILED NINE THOUSAND PEASANTS FACE STARVATION.


DROUGHT IS OUR BANE.. WITH ONLY ONE SOLUTION.
A CANAL, BRINGING WATER FROM NEIGHBORING IMAGE


FROM THE DAY I WAS POSTED HERE, I'VE TRIED TO BREAK THE CYCLE OF DROUGHT AND FAMINE THAT STRIKES TSUDA LIKE *CLOCKWORK*
I'VE BEGGED THE *SHŌGUNATE* AT EVERY TURN TO FUND THE CANAL, OR AT LEAST REDUCE OUR TAXES. BUT *NOTHING!* AND NOW *THIS* DROUGHT COULD END US *ALL*

TEN DAYS OF RAIN IN TWO *YEARS!* WE'VE DRAINED OUR RIVERS AND MARSHES. BUT THE FIELDS WON'T BLOOM, AND NOW COMES THE *DRY* SEASON. IF WE DON'T START *IMMEDIATELY* AND FINISH AT LEAST THREE MONTHS BEFORE SUMMER . . TSUDA IS *DOOMED*
WE NEED *TEN THOUSAND RYŌ!* IF I SELL OFF MY ASSETS, *ONE* THOUSAND. WE NEED *NINE THOUSAND* MORE!
ŌGAMI *DONO!*

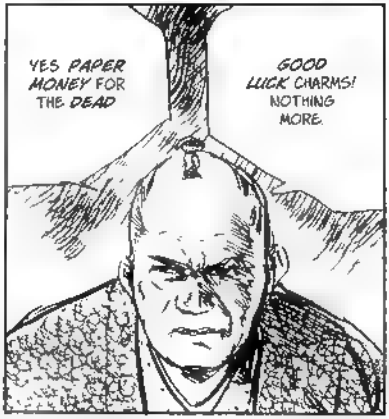

WILL YOU *LOAN* ME NINE THOUSAND *RYŌ*?

I DON'T NEED *RUMOR* TO GUESS YOU'VE AMASSED A *FORTUNE*.
FIVE HUNDRED *RYŌ* A HEAD. TWENTY ASSASSINATIONS WOULD MAKE YOU *TEN THOUSAND*

I KNOW WHY YOU WANT THAT GOLD. IF YOU DEFEAT THE *YAGYŪ*, YOU'LL NEED TO *BRIBE* EDO TO REINSTATE THE ŌGAMI CLAN FOR YOUR SON.

BUT IF MAY SPEAK MY MIND IT'S ALL JUST EBISU KOBAN

EBISU KOBAN ?


YES PAPER MONEY FOR THE DEAD
GOOD LUCK CHARMS! NOTHING MORE.

EVEN IF YOU TRIUMPH, YOU'VE CRUSHED TWO HAN AND THREE SHÔGUNATE TERRITORIES

EDO CAN NEVER REINSTATE YOU NOW, NO MATTER WHAT YOU PAY AND TO BE BLUNT

FOR ONE WHO WAS ONCE *KŌGI KAISHAKUNIN* TO REBUILD HIS CLAN WITH MONEY FROM KILLING THE *INNOCENT* IS *EVIL* NO MATTER *WHAT* YOU HAVE SUFFERED *HEAVEN* WILL NOT *PERMIT* IT!

YOUR CLAN WAS ONCE FAMED FOR *BUSHIDŌ* BUT *MONEY* CAN'T BUY BACK THE PAST

KSSSH

SKSSSHH
SPLSH
THUS YOUR GOLD IS BUT *EBISU KOBAN*, FIT FOR THE *GRAVE* BUT SAVING NINE THOUSAND LIVES. NOW, *THAT* IS *VIRTUE!*
OR SHOULD I SAY *PENANCE?* FOR ALL YOU'VE *KILLED?*

AND—FORGIVE ME FOR BEING SO DIRECT—LET *ME* HELP *YOU*. YOU'RE HARRIED BY THE *YAGYŪ*? WE CAN GET YOU TO EDO

YOUR FEUD WITH THE *YAGYŪ* DOESN'T CONCERN THE *SHŌGUNATE*. THESE ARREST ORDERS *OFFEND* ME.
I DON'T TAKE ORDERS FROM THOSE POWER-HUNGRY *YAGYŪ*, AND I *WON'T* OBEY NOW

SPIRITING YOU TO EDO DOESN'T BETRAY THE *SHŌGUN* IN ANY WAY
THINK—THE ROAD AHEAD IS HARD. EVEN BY BOAT, YOU MAY NOT MAKE IT
NOR CAN YOU *ENJOY* KILLING CIVILIANS. SO LET *US* GET YOU PAST THE *YAGYŪ STRIDE* INTO EDO AND HAVE YOUR *REVENGE*.

IT'S TIME TO USE THAT MONEY!

NEVER!

WE HAVE NO GOLD NOR EBISU KOBAN!
NOT ONCE HAVE I THOUGHT TO REBUILD MY CLAN.
FATHER AND SON, WE LIVE IN MEIFUMADŌ LIFE AND DEATH ARE ONE

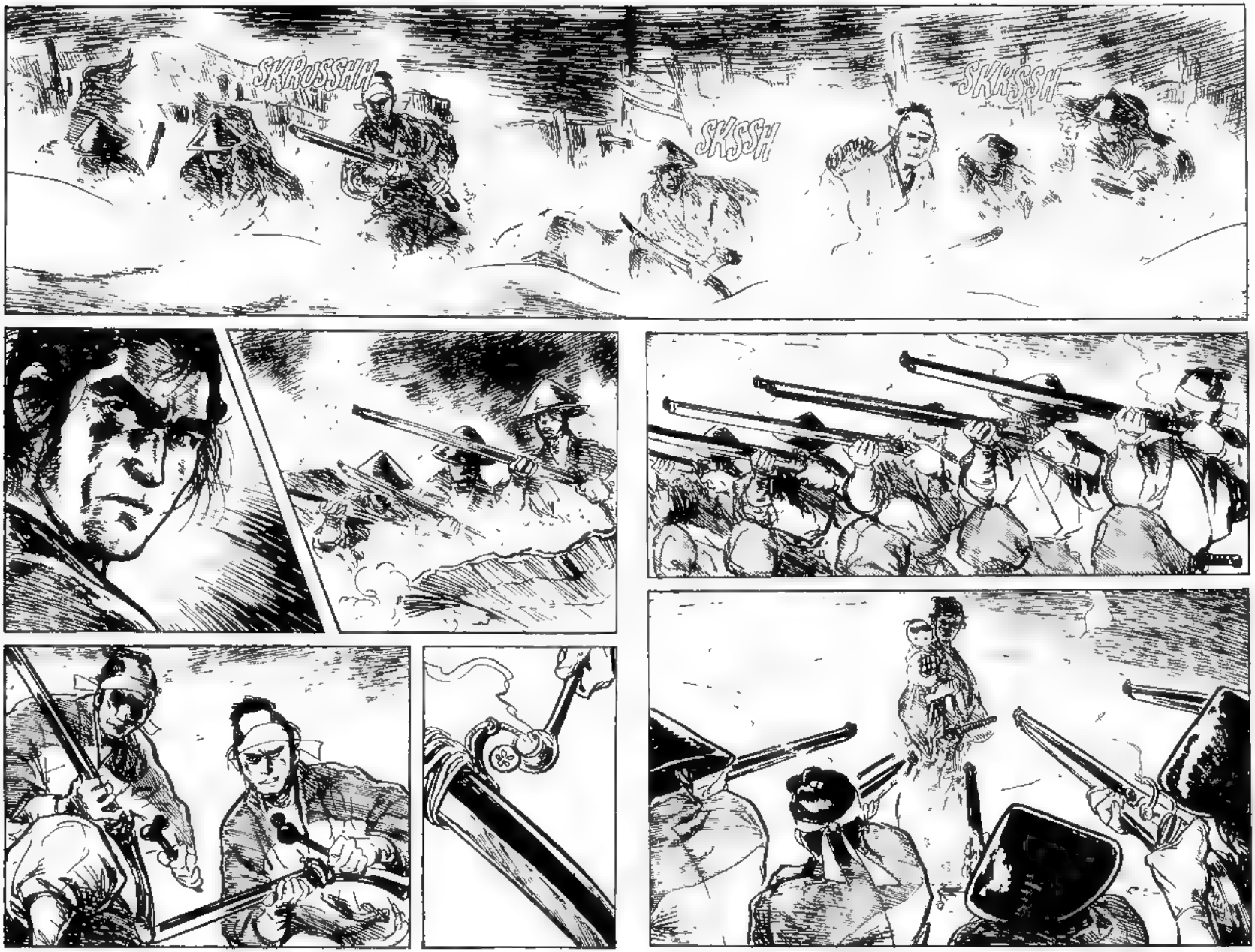
THEN ALL THAT GOLD. FOR WHAT?!
I NEED NOT TELL YOU.

FARE-WELL

WAIT!

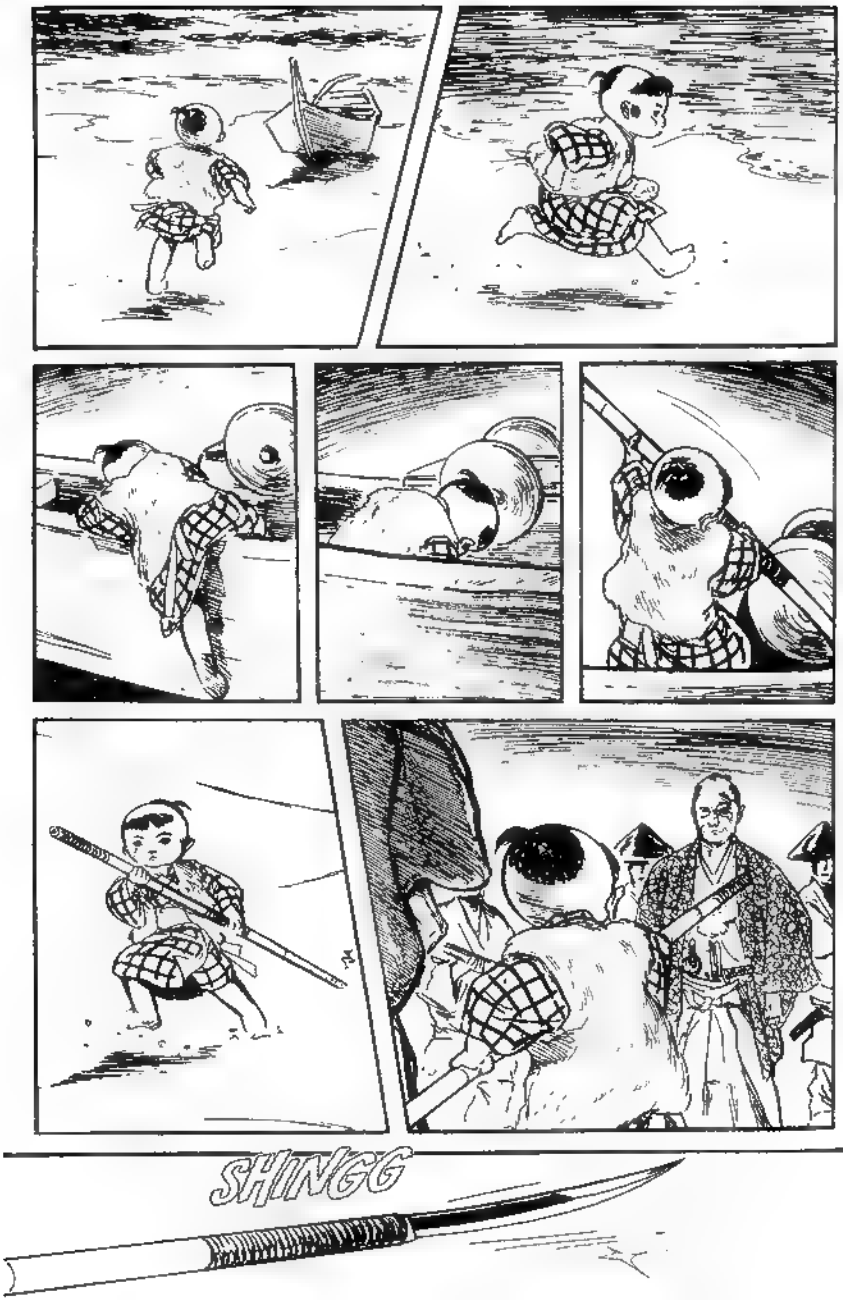
SO BE IT. IN EXCHANGE FOR OUR NINE THOUSAND LIVES, I'LL TAKE YOUR FIVE
THE FIVE THOUSAND RYŌ BOUNTY WILL AT LEAST START OUR CANAL. THE ŌGAWA CANAL!

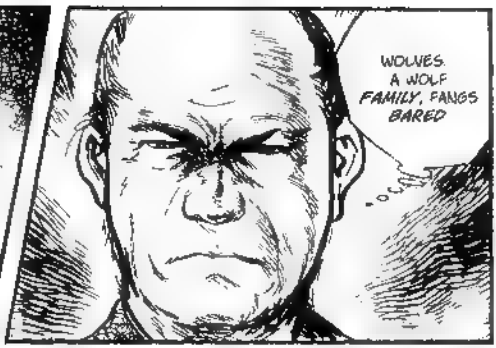
TO ARMS!

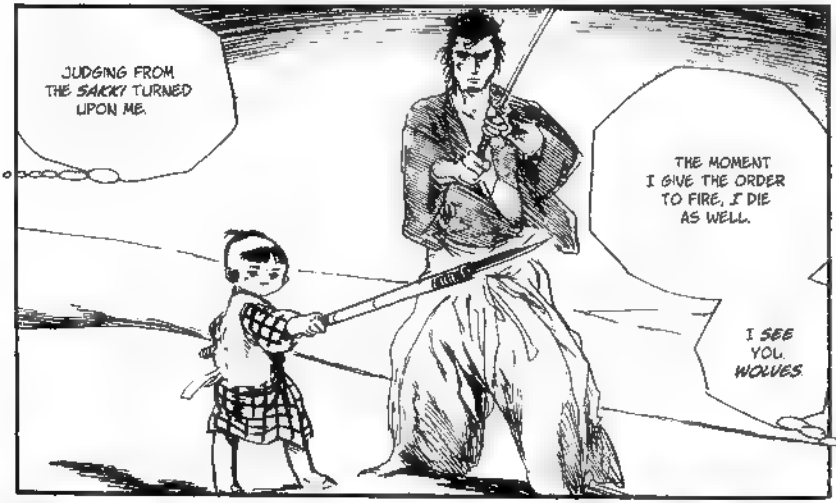

SKRUSSHH
SKSSH
SKRSSH

ÔGAMI DOMO! ONE LAST TIME!
I CANNOT GIVE WHAT I DO NOT HAVE
SINCE WHEN DOES A STARVING WOLF HAVE GOLD?

TAKE IT IF YOU CAN!


SHINGG


WOLVES. A WOLF FAMILY, FANGS BARED

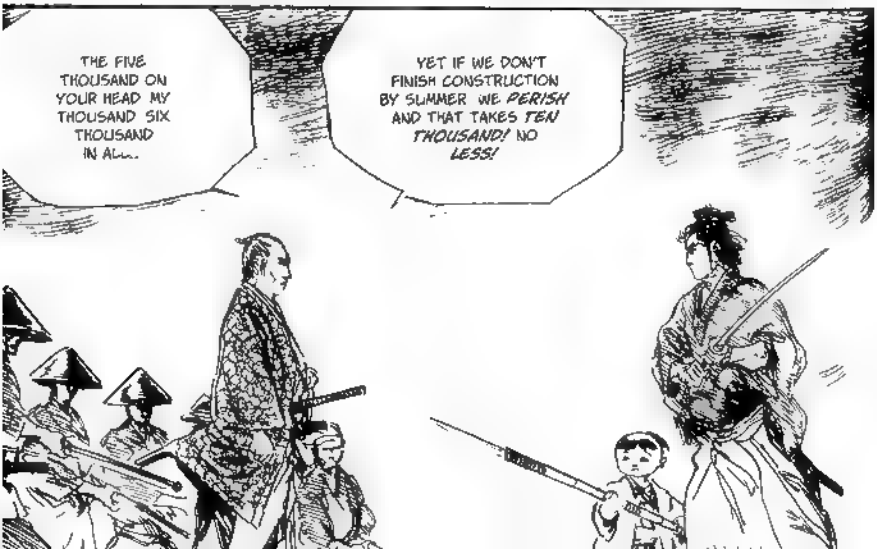

JUDGING FROM THE SAKKI TURNED UPON ME.
THE MOMENT I GIVE THE ORDER TO FIRE, I DIE AS WELL.
I SEE YOU, WOLVES.

LOWER YOUR MUSKETS!

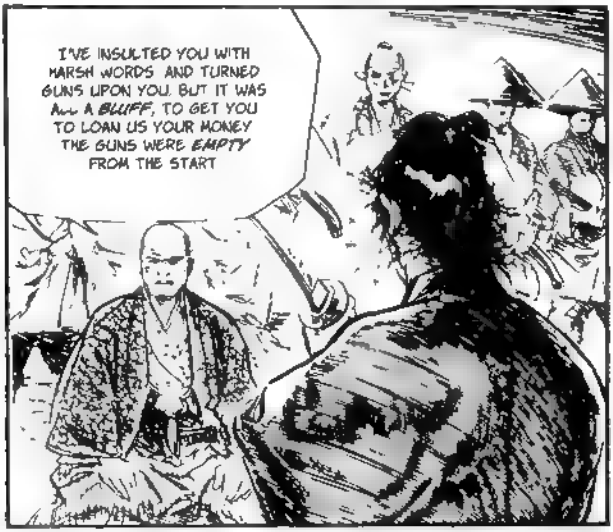
AH?!

ŌSAMI-DONO. I DON'T ORDER THEM LOWERED TO SAVE MY LIFE.

IF IT WOULD HELP THE NINE THOUSAND PEASANTS OF TSUDA, I WOULD GLADLY OFFER THESE OLD BONES.
YET EVEN IF I BROUGHT YOU DOWN WITH ME, IT BUYS NO TIME FOR TSUDA. IN THE END, IT DOESN'T BUILD OUR CANAL.


THE FIVE THOUSAND ON YOUR HEAD. MY THOUSAND. SIX THOUSAND IN ALL...
YET IF WE DON'T FINISH CONSTRUCTION BY SUMMER, WE PERISH AND THAT TAKES TEN THOUSAND! NO LESS!

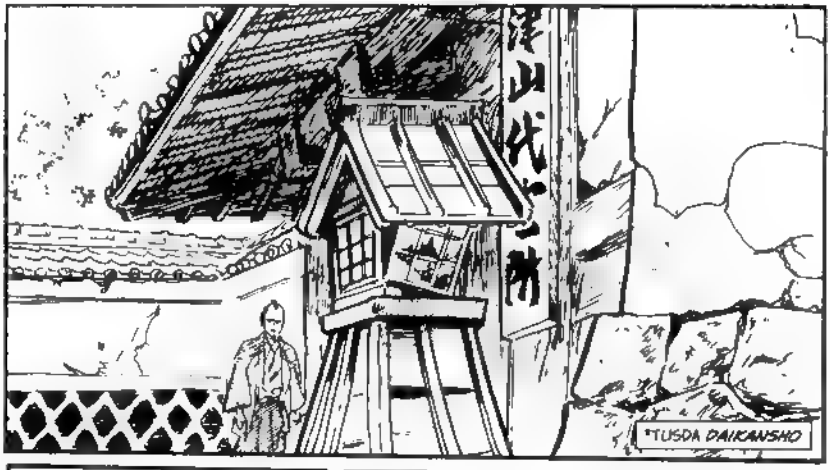
SIX THOUSAND ISN'T ENOUGH!
ŌGAMI-DONO!

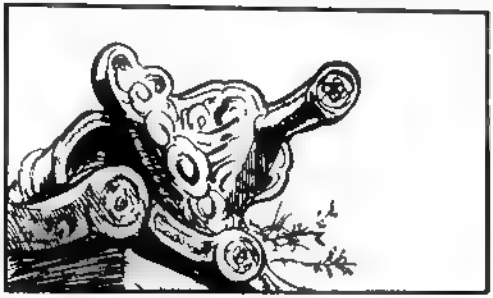

I'VE INSULTED YOU WITH HARSH WORDS AND TURNED GUNS UPON YOU. BUT IT WAS ALL A BLUFF, TO GET YOU TO LOAN US YOUR MONEY. THE GUNS WERE EMPTY FROM THE START

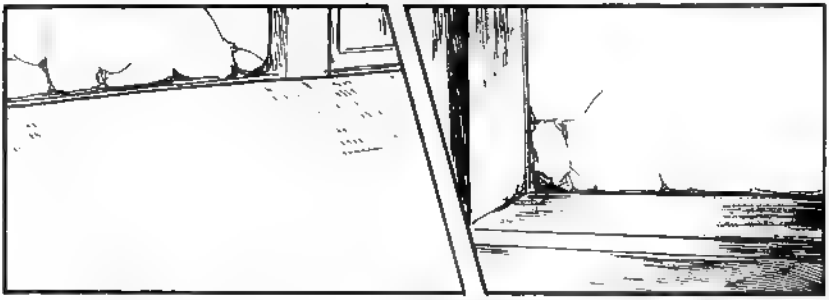
FORGIVE ME!

I DOUBT YOU'VE HAD A MOMENT'S REST, EVADING PURSUERS NIGHT AND DAY. IT'S PRESUMPTUOUS, YET
PLEASE REST AT MY COMPOUND, EVEN FOR A DAY. I MUST MAKE UP FOR THIS OUTRAGE.

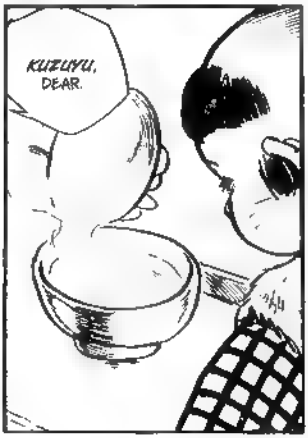
....
....
PLEASE! ŌGAMI-DONO!
WE ACCEPT


*TUSDA DAIKANSHO



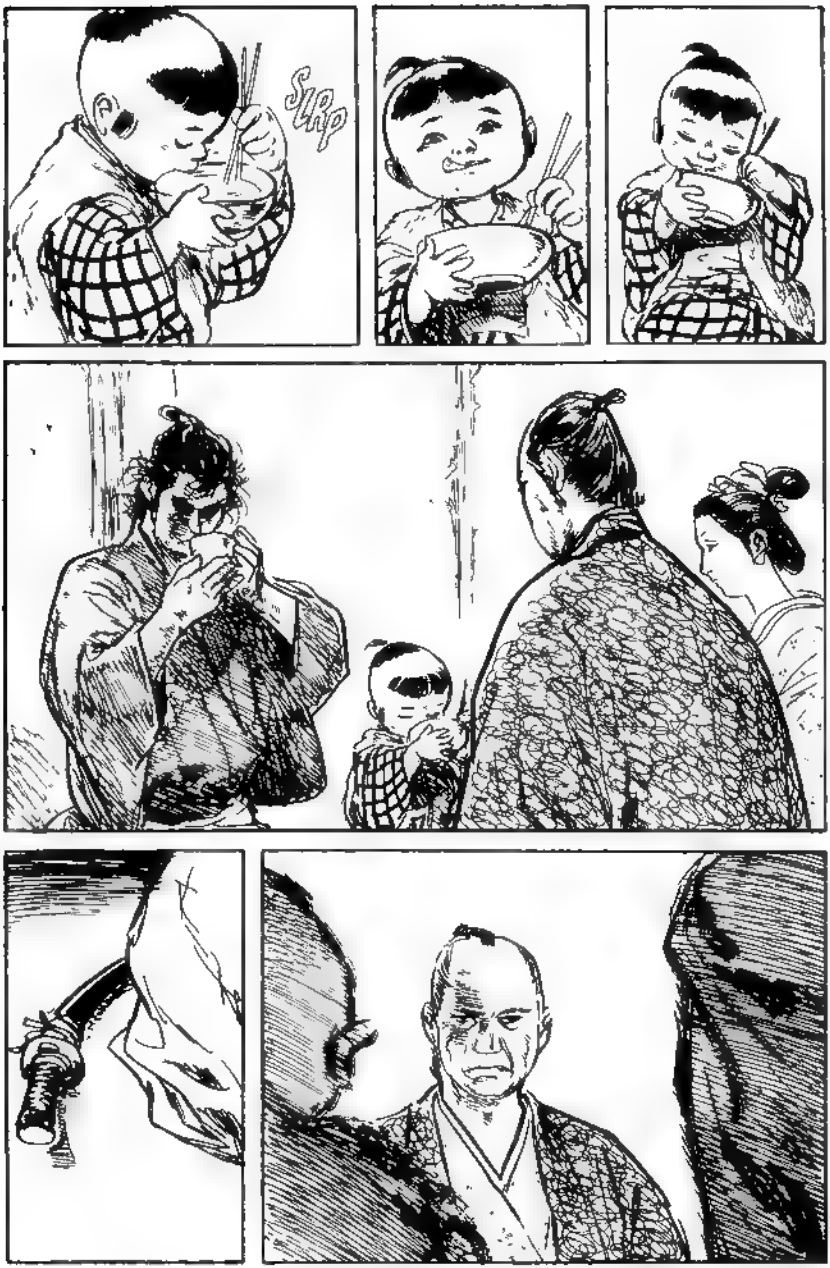


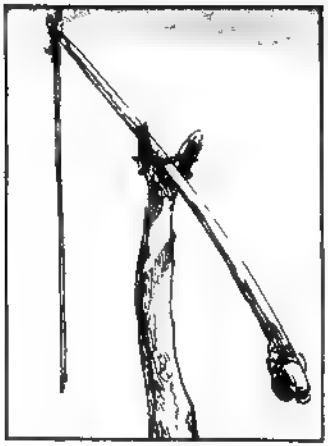
IT'S ONLY *SAYU*
I GLADLY PARTAKE


KUZUYU, DEAR.

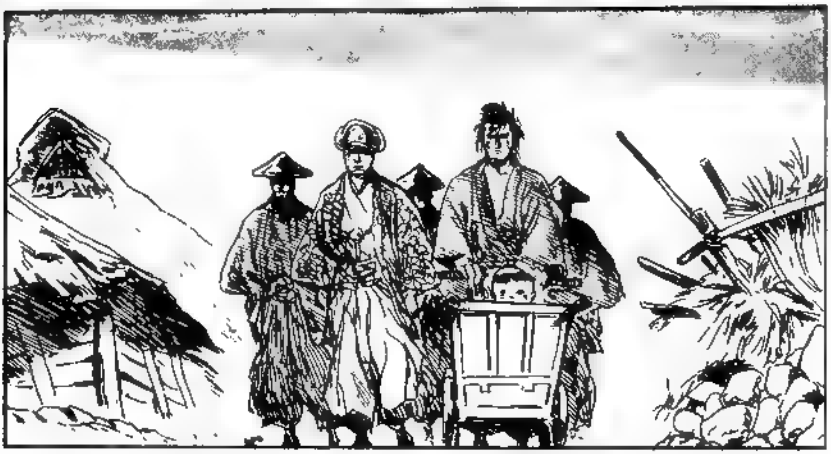
IT'S ALL WE HAVE. FORGIVE ME, PLEASE?
AT LEAST IT'LL WARM YOUR TUMMY

HO HO! SUCH A *POLITE* YOUNG MAN!


Slup

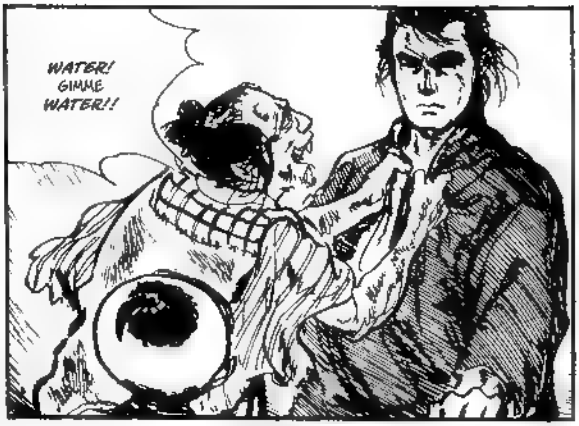


FDD
FDD
GARA
GARA



EEE HEE HEE!
WATER! WADDAHH! HA HA HA!

WADDAHH! HA HA HEE!


WATER! GIMME WATER!!

GET BACK, YOU!

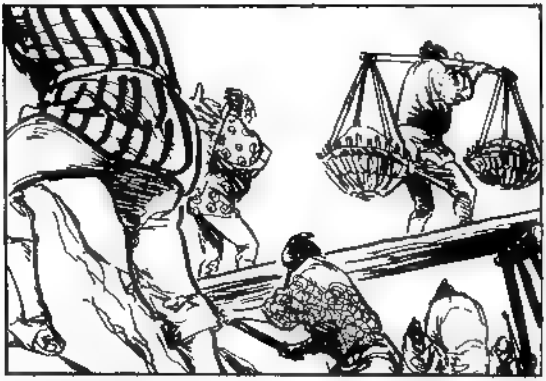
....! ....!

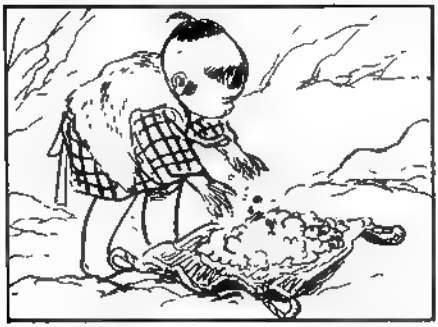
W-WATER! WATER, WADDAH!!

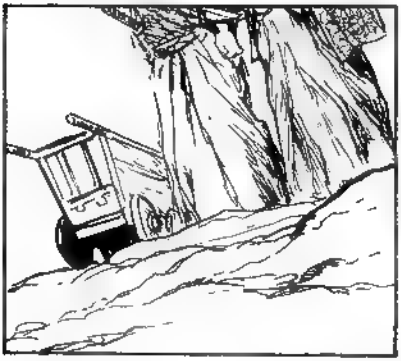
UNNG.
HKK.

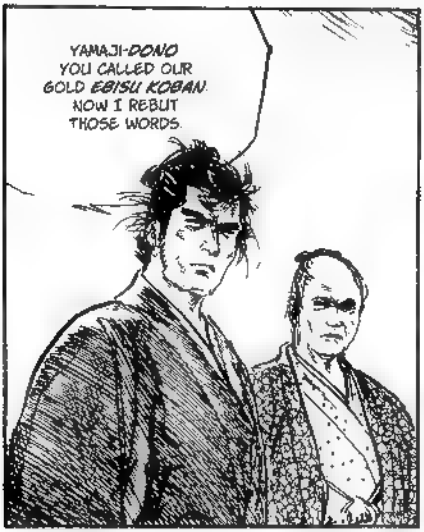
STEADY THERE, HERE'S SOME WATER
AHH.!

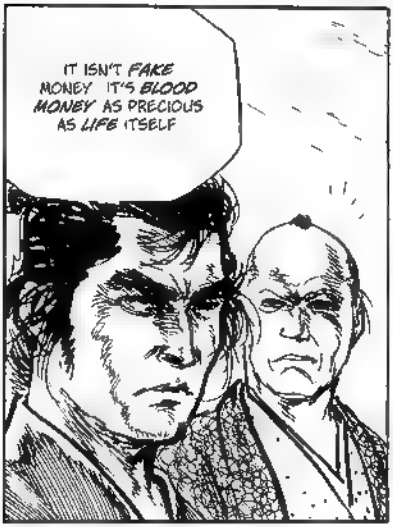
THERE ISN'T MUCH. BE STRONG..
Y-YASSIR.



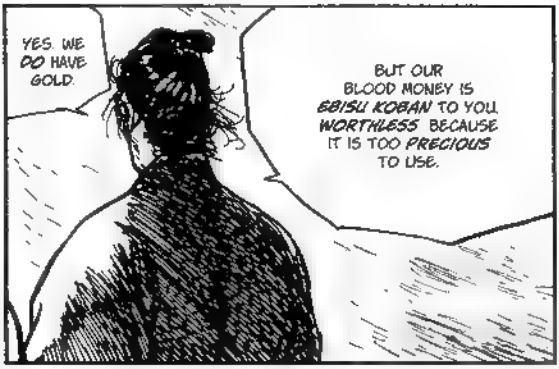





YAMAJI-*DONO* YOU CALLED OUR GOLD *EBISU KOBAN*. NOW I REBUT THOSE WORDS.


IT ISN'T *FAKE* MONEY IT'S *BLOOD MONEY* AS PRECIOUS AS *LIFE* ITSELF

THEN, YOU DO..?!

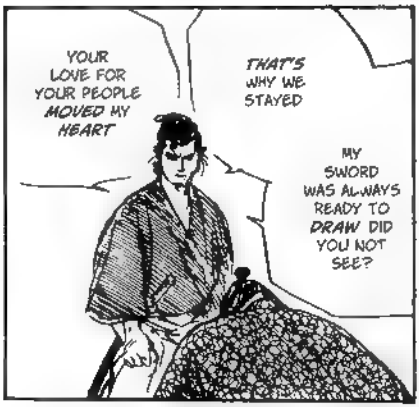

YES. WE DO HAVE GOLD.
BUT OUR BLOOD MONEY IS EBISU KOBAN TO YOU. WORTHLESS BECAUSE IT IS TOO PRECIOUS TO USE.

THAT'S WHAT I MEANT WHEN I SAID WE HAD NOTHING
BEHOLD, ŌGAMI-DONO!
BEHOLD THE PEASANTS! THEY KNOW IT'S HOPELESS YET STILL THEY TRY!

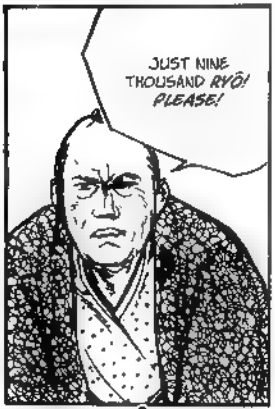
I ASKED YOU TO STAY AND REST BUT IN TRUTH, I HOPED YOU'D SEE THEIR DESPERATE SUFFERING, AND FEEL MOVED TO PITY

ŌGAMI-DONO!

I HAVE TOLD YOU, YAMAJ.-DONO--
--WE LIVE IN MEIFUMADŌ WE NEED NO REST!


YOUR LOVE FOR YOUR PEOPLE MOVED MY HEART
THAT'S WHY WE STAYED
MY SWORD WAS ALWAYS READY TO DRAW DID YOU NOT SEE?

....
....


JUST NINE THOUSAND RYŌ! PLEASE!

THE PEASANTS OF TSUDA SUFFER! WITH PARCHED THROATS!
SAVE THEM! I BEG YOU!!

OUR *GOALS* ARE DIFFERENT, BUT WE *BOTH* GIVE OUR LIVES TO A *CAUSE* AND YET

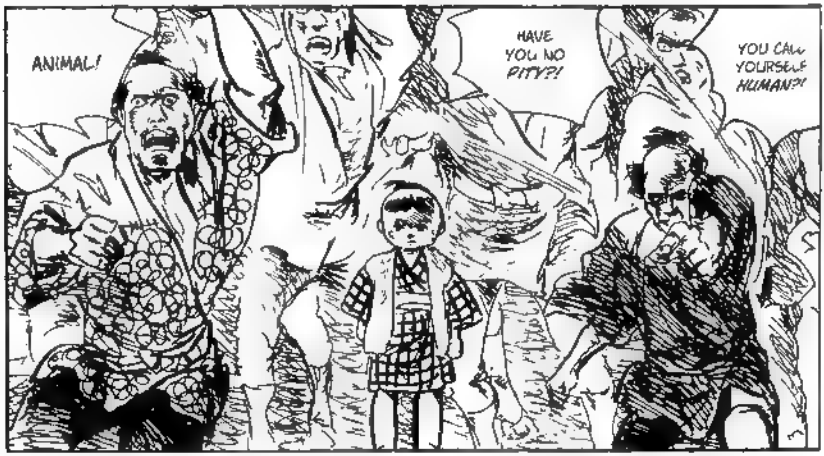
WE *MUST* HAVE *VENGEANCE!*

SO *HEAVY* IS OUR *QUEST!*

DAIGORO!!

BEAST!
MONSTER

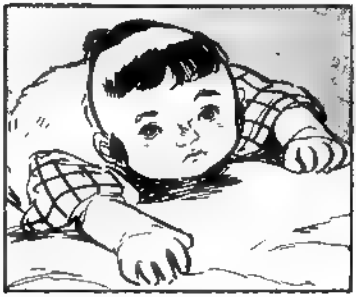
DEMON!
DEVIL!!


ANIMAL!
HAVE YOU NO PITY?!
YOU CALL YOURSELF HUMAN?!

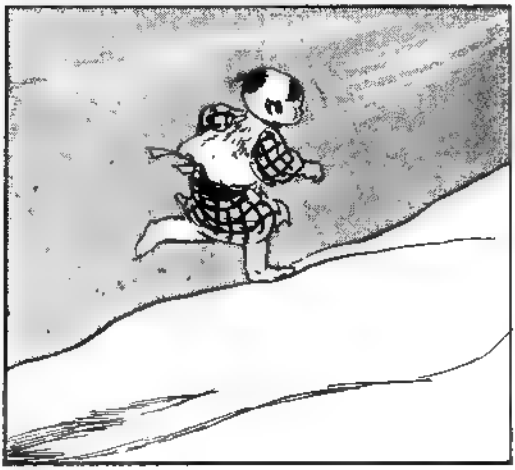
DEMON!

DEVIL!
BEAST!!

MURDERER!!
DEMON!!



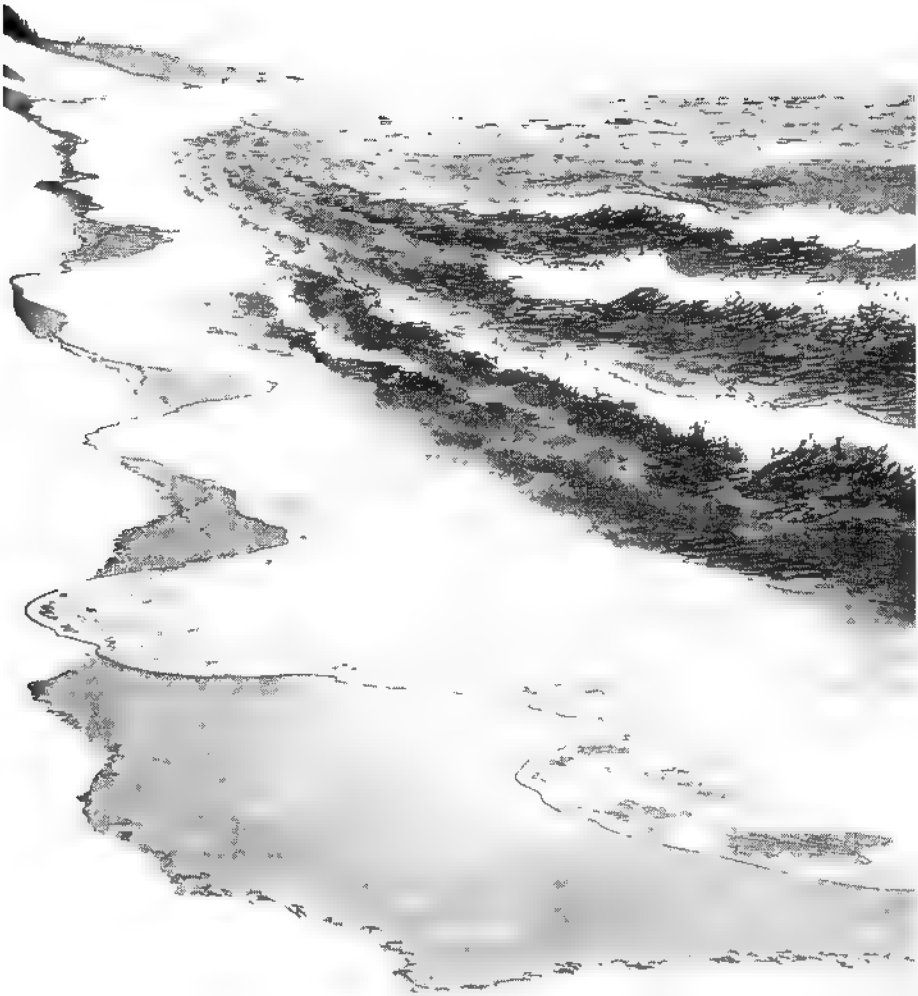
PAPA...!!

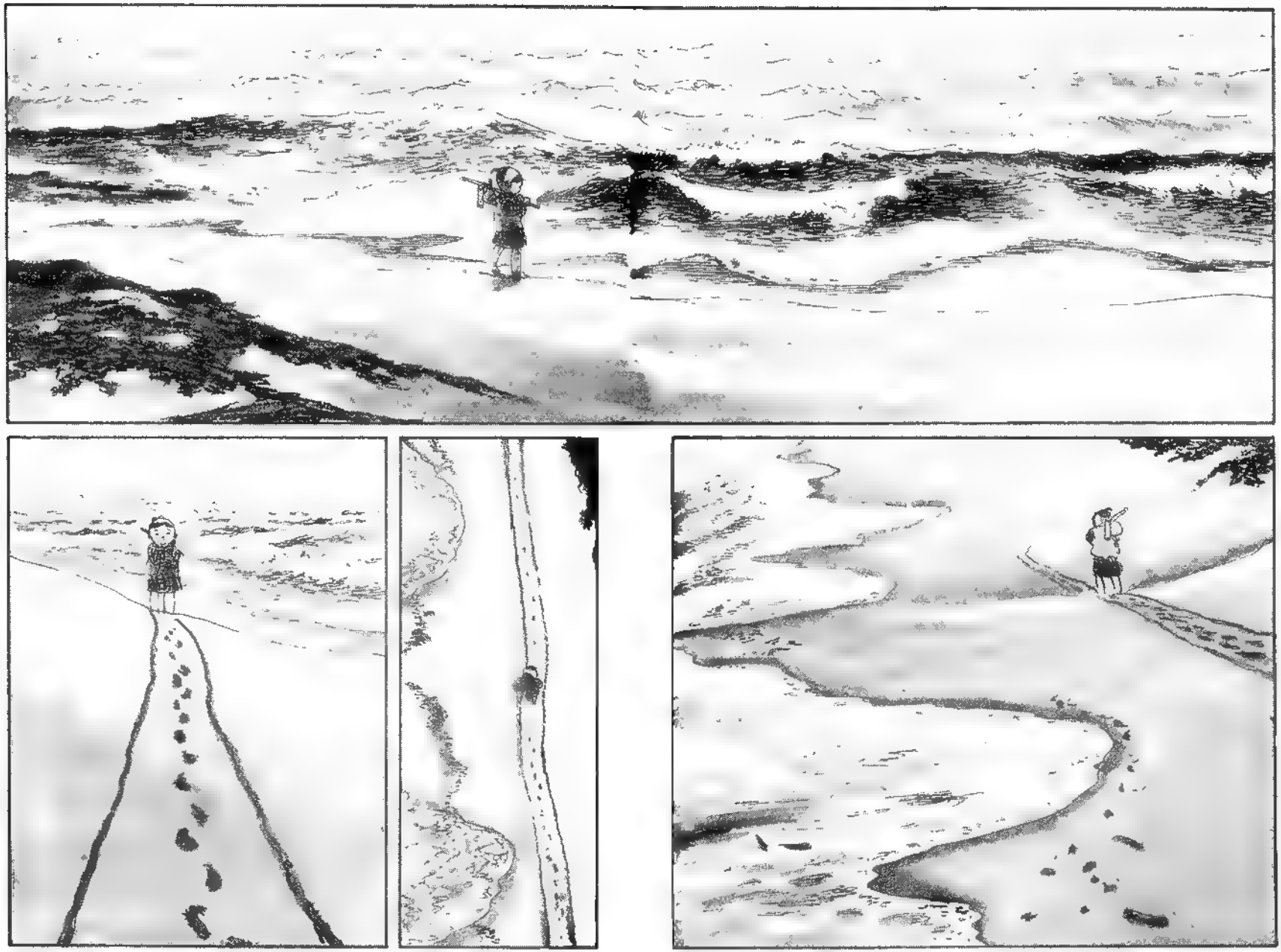


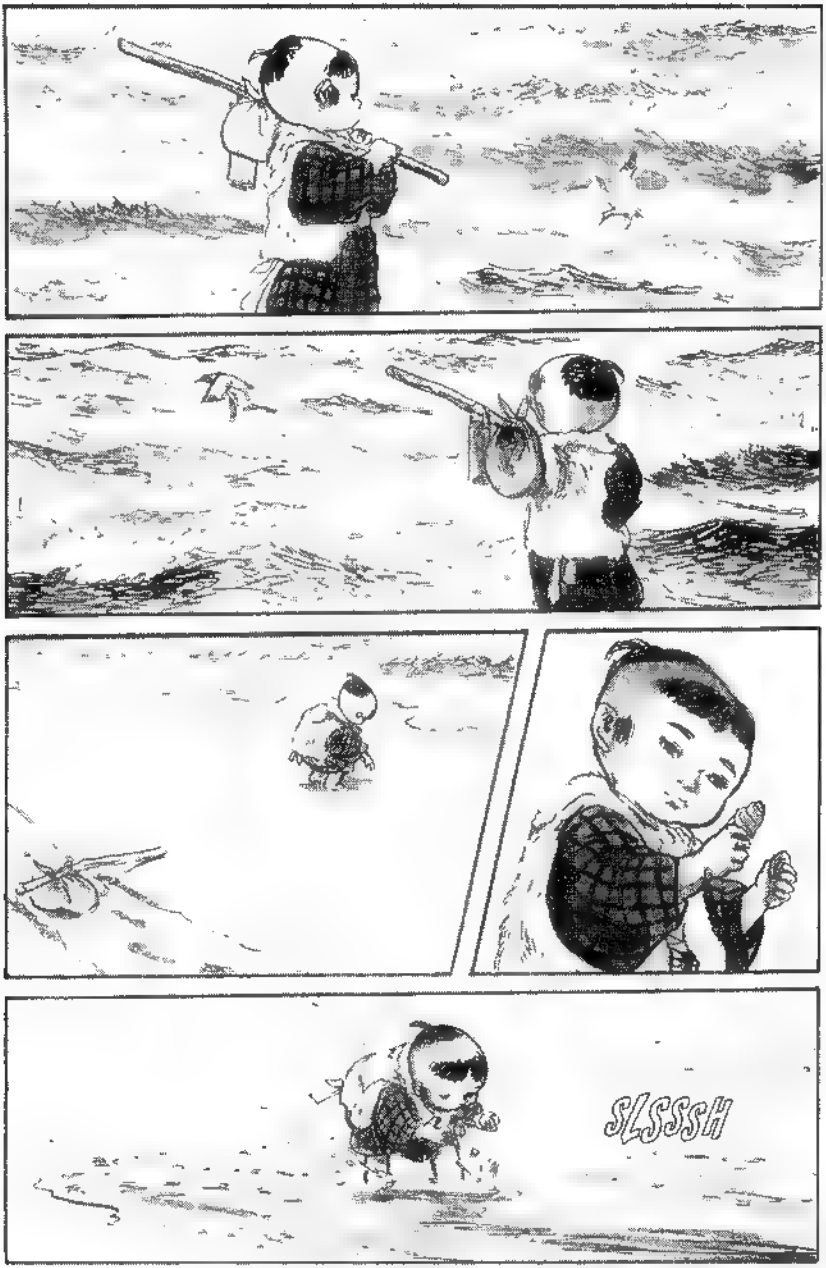
#MangaProject on irc.Dal.net
Lone Wolf and Cub

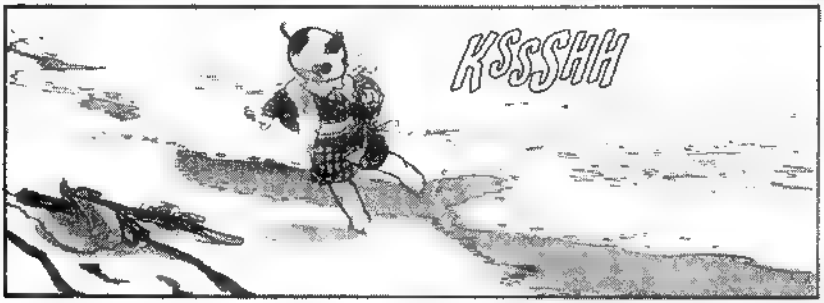
the ninety-first

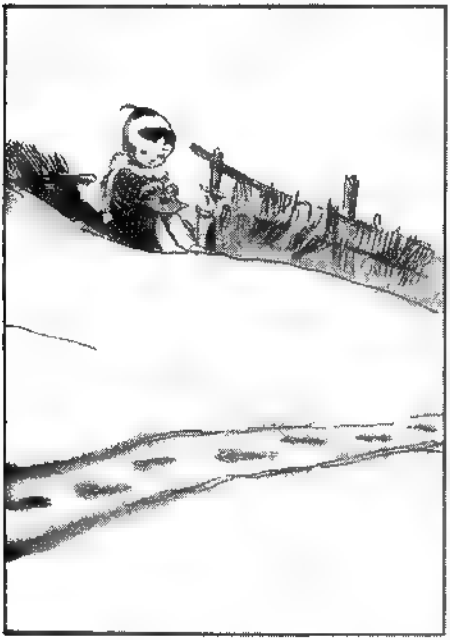
Lifeline

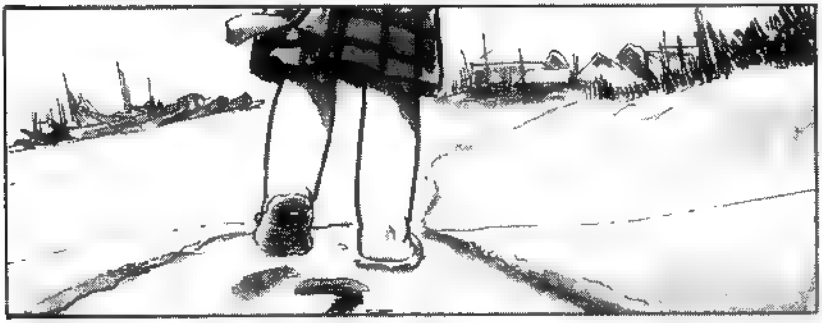


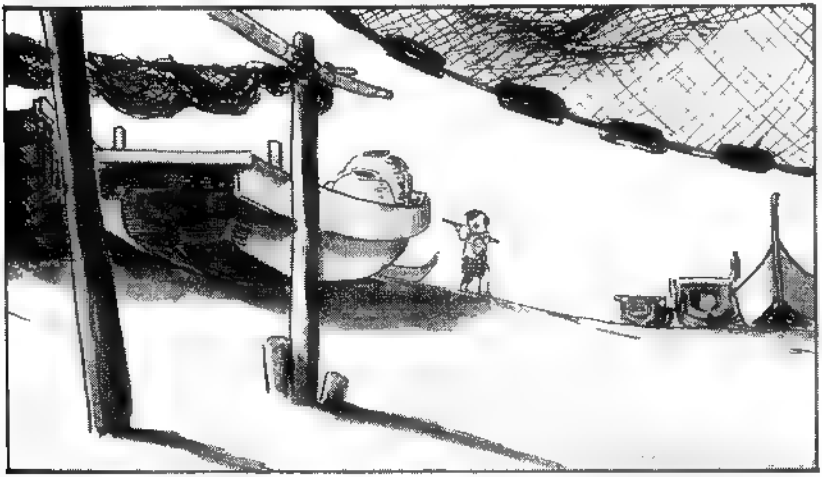


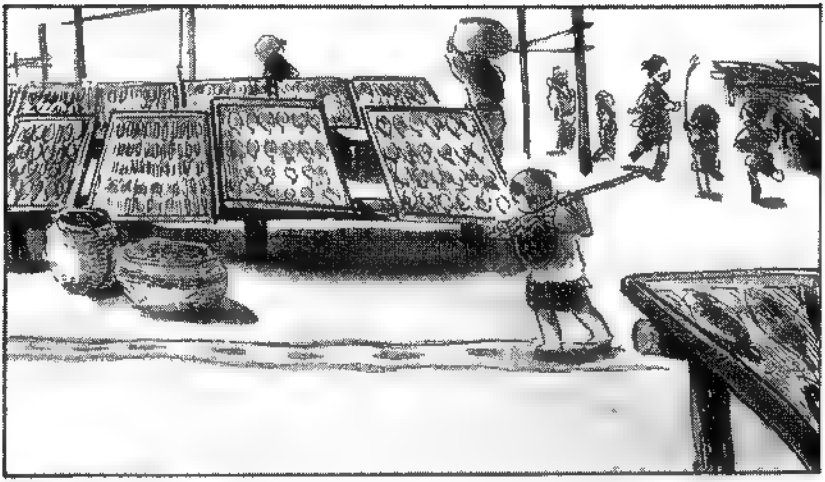

SLSSSH

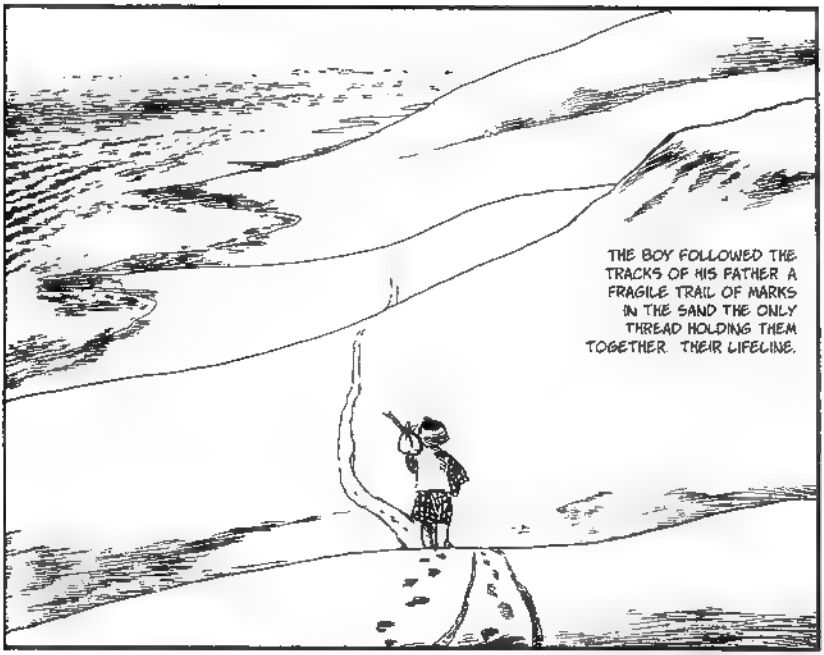

KSSSHH

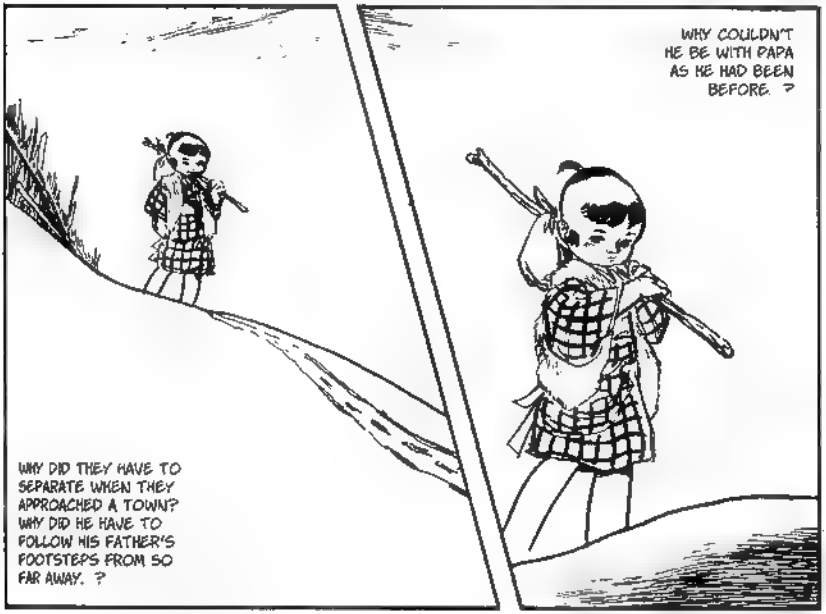




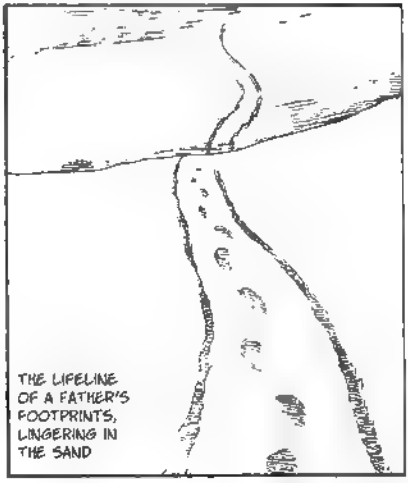


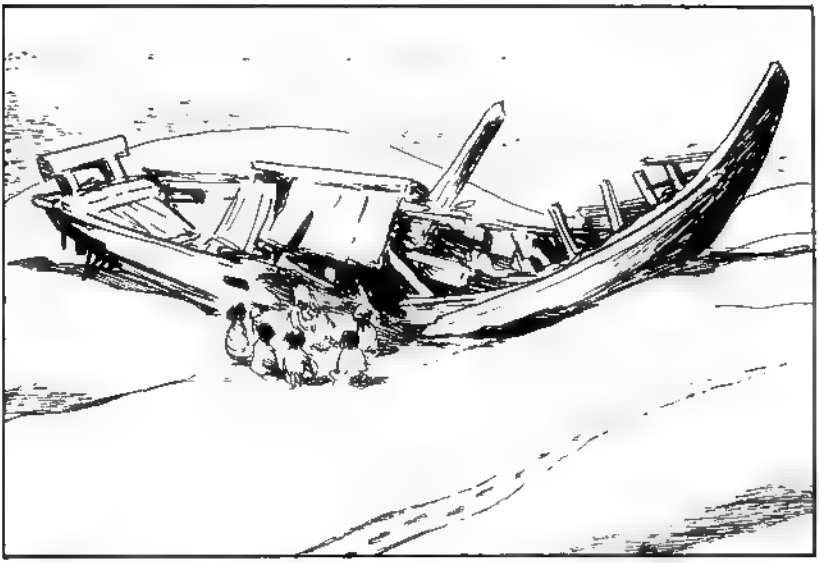



THE BOY FOLLOWED THE TRACKS OF HIS FATHER A FRAGILE TRAIL OF MARKS IN THE SAND THE ONLY THREAD HOLDING THEM TOGETHER. THEIR LIFELINE.


WHY DID THEY HAVE TO SEPARATE WHEN THEY APPROACHED A TOWN? WHY DID HE HAVE TO FOLLOW HIS FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS FROM SO FAR AWAY. ?
WHY COULDN'T HE BE WITH PAPA AS HE HAD BEEN BEFORE. ?

THEY WERE PURSUED. TO AVOID SHEDDING INNOCENT BLOOD, IT WAS BEST TO AVOID HOSTILE EYES. SO REASONABLE. BUT DID THE BOY UNDERSTAND?





CUCKOO!
CUCKOO!
CUCKOO!

DO YE' LI'L ONES KNOW *WHY* THET CUCKOO BIRD SINGS "CUCKOO, CUCKOO"?

WE CALL 'IM *CUCKOO* CUZ THET'S WHAT HE *SINGS*.
BUT TODAY I'LL TELL YE' TH' REST OF 'IS STORY

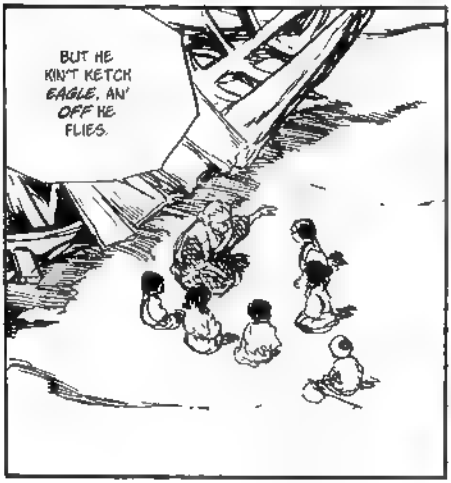
OLD CUCKOO GOTS ONE *WHITE* LEG 'N' ONE *BLACK*, SEE? SO SOMETIMES WE CALLS 'IM "*ONE-LEG STOCKING*"

'N' *WHY'S* THET? T'S A SAD, *SAD* TALE.

ONCE UPON A TIME, LONG LONG AGO A DADDY LEFT HIS WEE LI'L BABY BESIDE THE PADDY WHEN HE WAS CUTTIN' WATER WEEDS.

'N' AFORE HE KNOWS T, DOWN SWOOPS AN EAGLE AN' SNATCHES UP BABY HIGH IN TH' SKY!

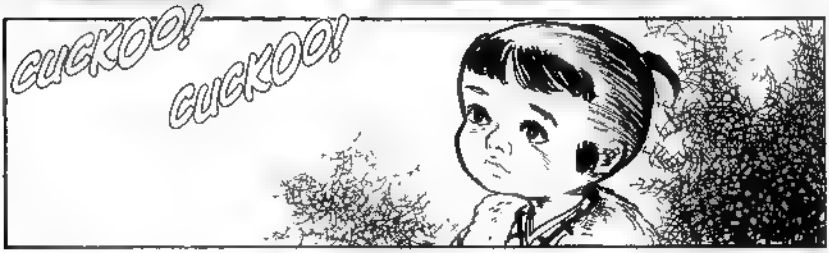
LORDY HOW TERRIBLE!
PAPA, HE COMES A' RUNNIN ! BUT WITH JES HALF HIS LEGGIN'S HITCHED UP!


BUT HE KIN'T KETCH EAGLE, AN' OFF HE FLIES.

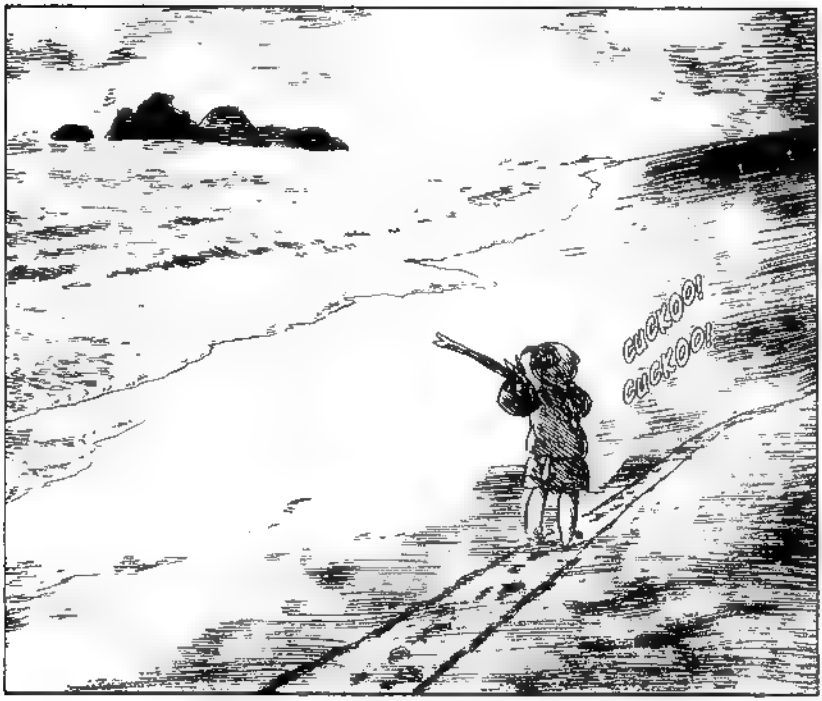
'N' THET POOR PAPA, HE TURNS INTO A BIRD ON TH' SPOT 'N' EVER AFTER HE SEARCHES FER BABY CRYIN' "CUCKOO, CUCKOO, CUCKOO !"

THET "CUCKOO," IT MEANS, "CHILD COME BACK T' ME, CHILD COME HOME."

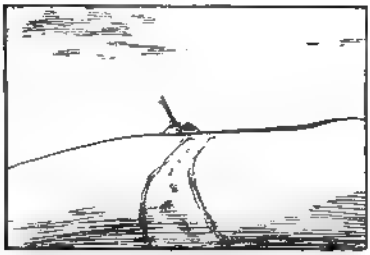
"CHILD COME BACK TO ME, CHILD COME HOME!"
CUCKOO!
CUCKOO!


CUCKOO!
CUCKOO!

YEP THET'S WHY HE SINGS, AND *THET'S* WHY HE GOTS ONE BLACK LEG.
HE DONE TURNED *BIRD* WITH *HALF* HIS LEGGIN'S ON.

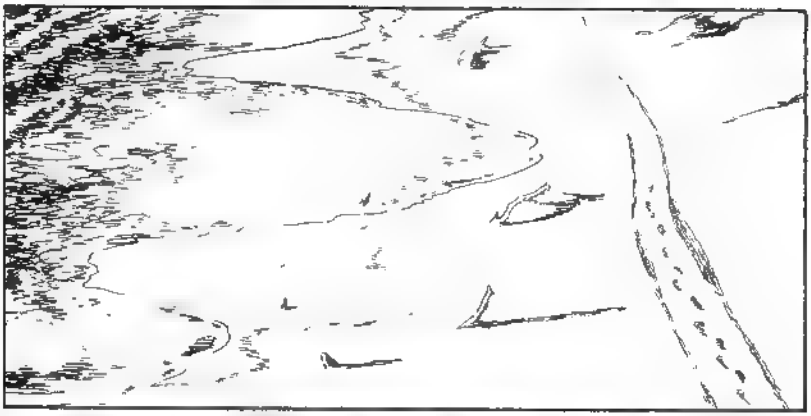

CUCKOO!
CUCKOO!

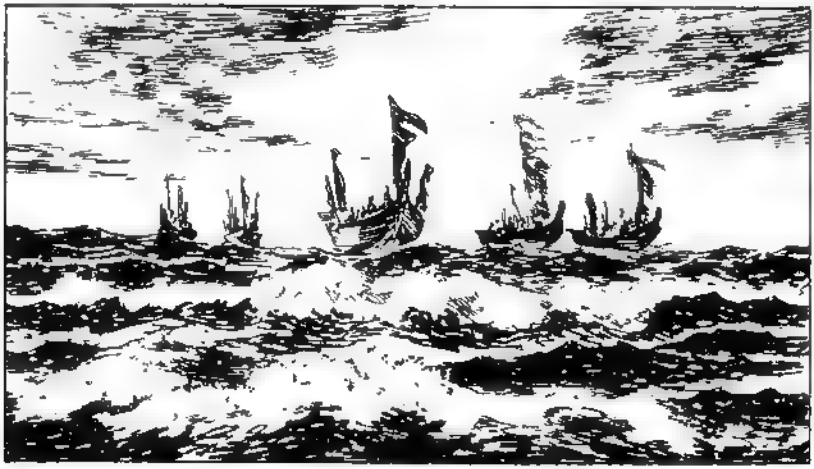
CUCKOO!
CUCKOO!



CUCKOO!
CUCKOO!

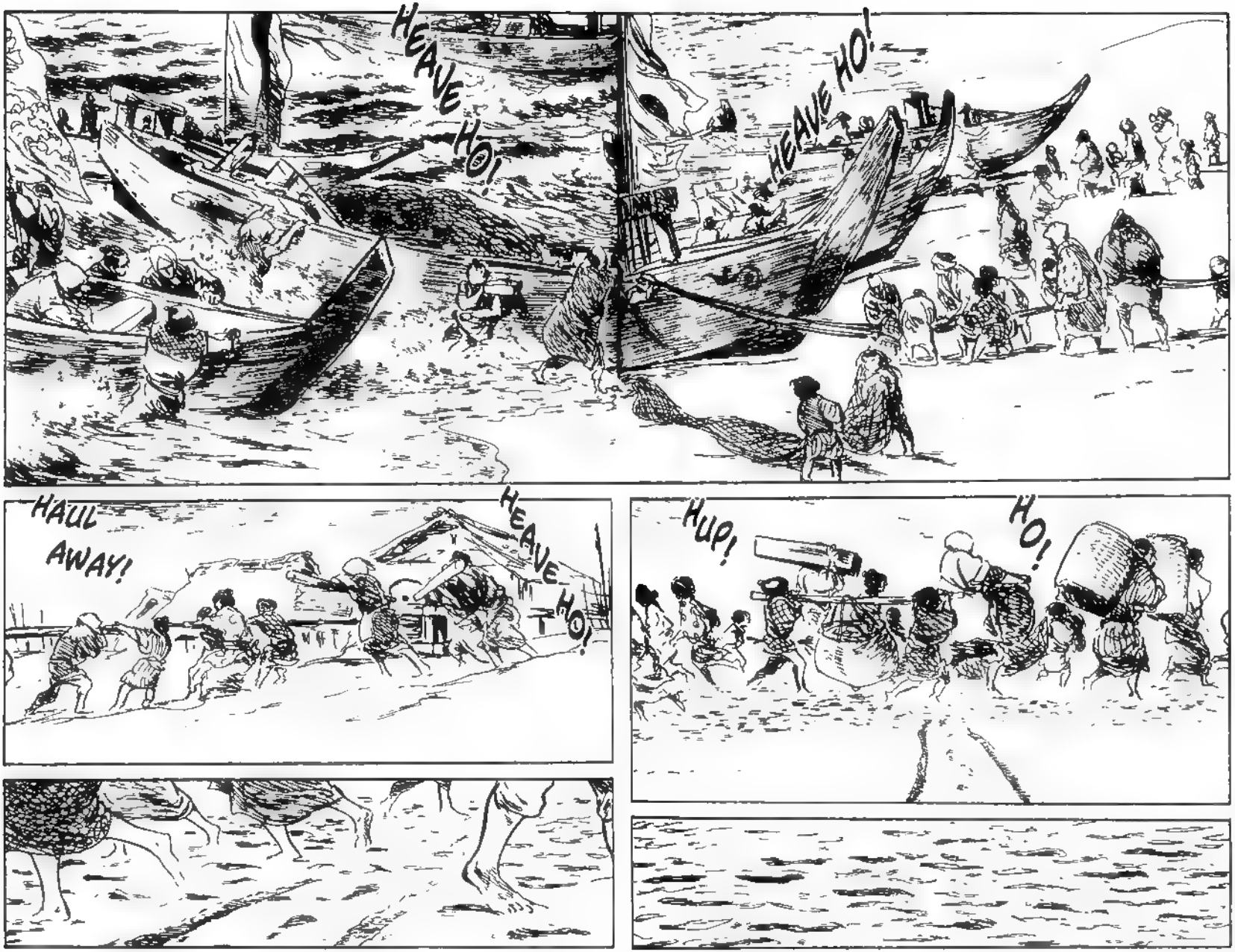
CUCKOO!
CUCKOO!



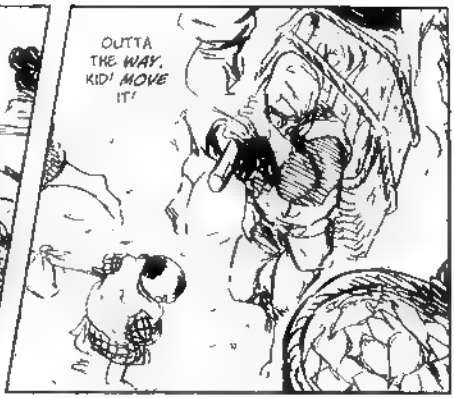


HURRAH!

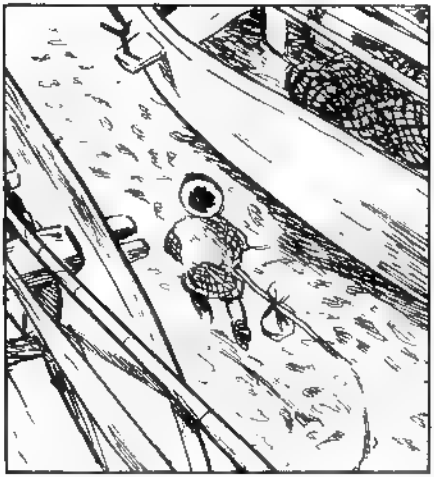
WELCOME!
HURRAH!

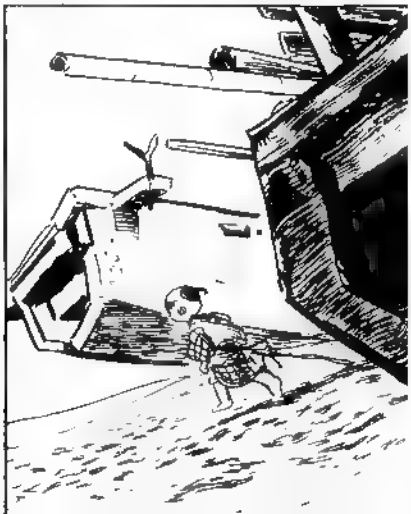

HEAVE HO!
HEAVE HO!
HAUL AWAY!
HEAVE HO!
HUP!
HO!

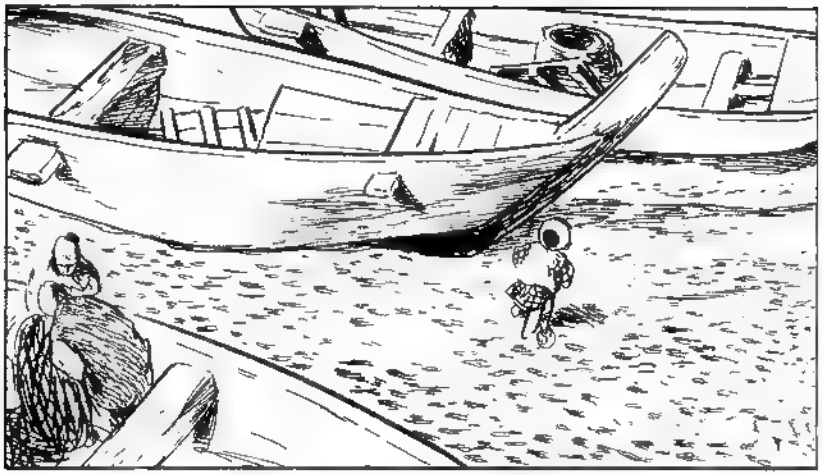
HEY! LOOK OUT!

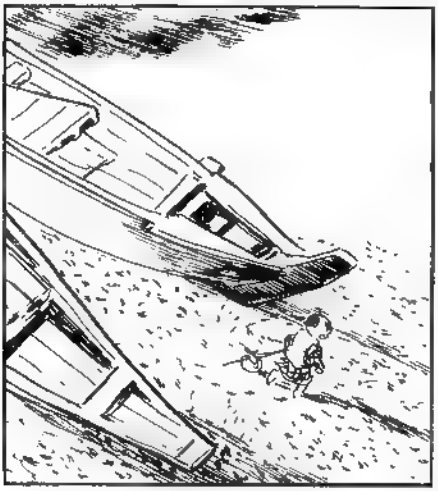

OUTTA THE WAY, KID! MOVE IT!

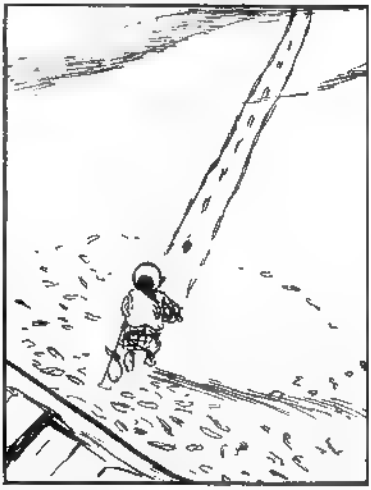
WHAT'CHA LOOKIN' FOR?! DAMNFOOL KID!

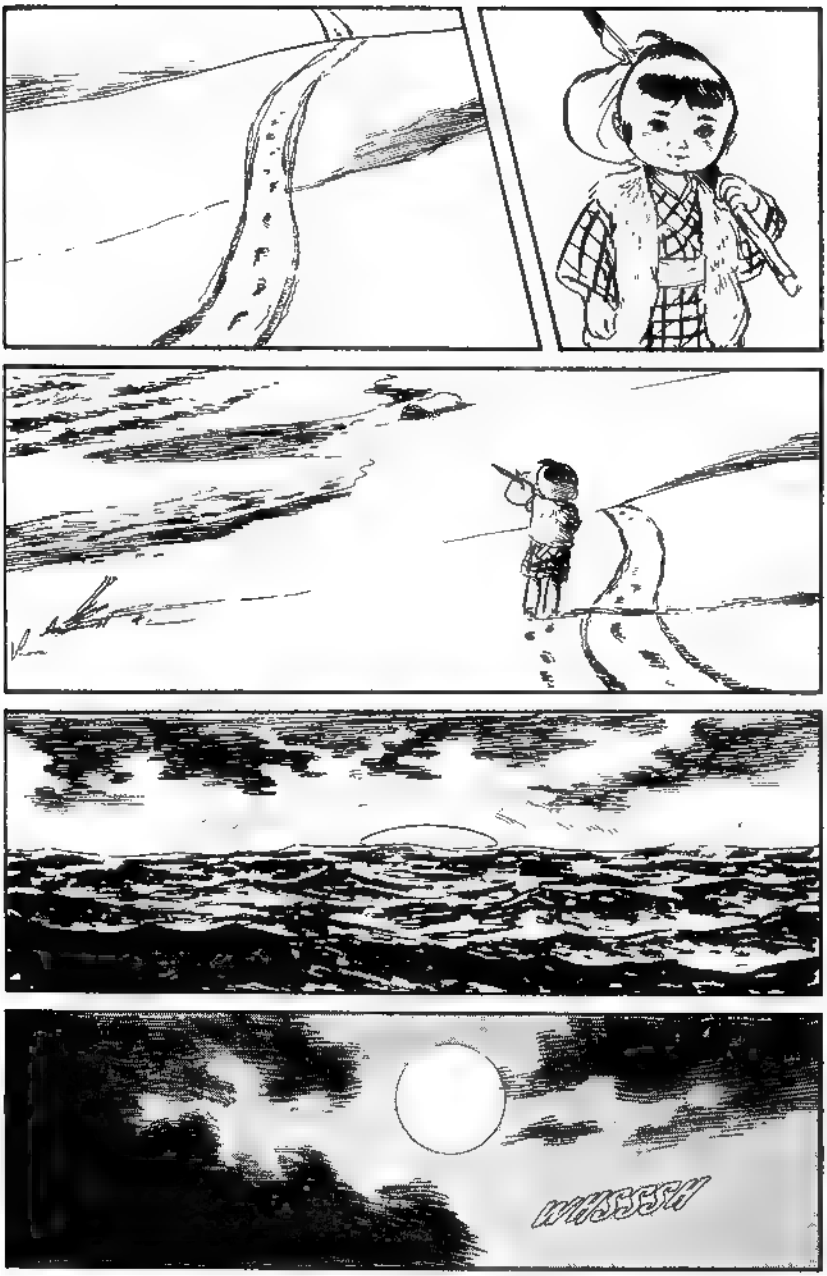


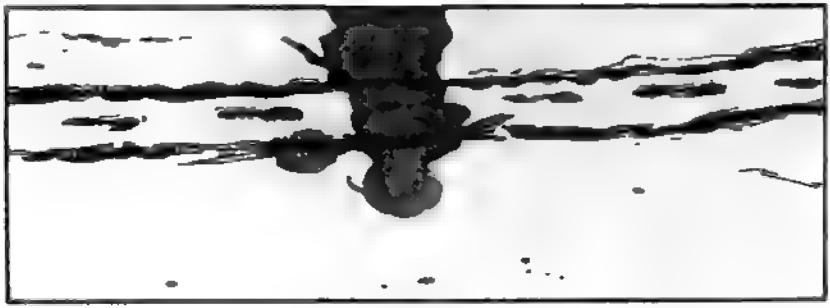








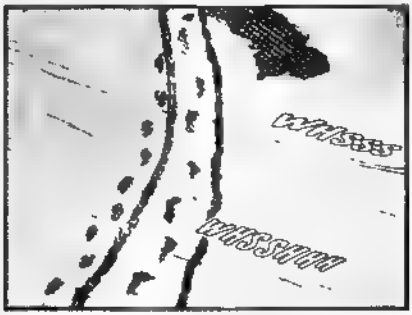

WHSSSH

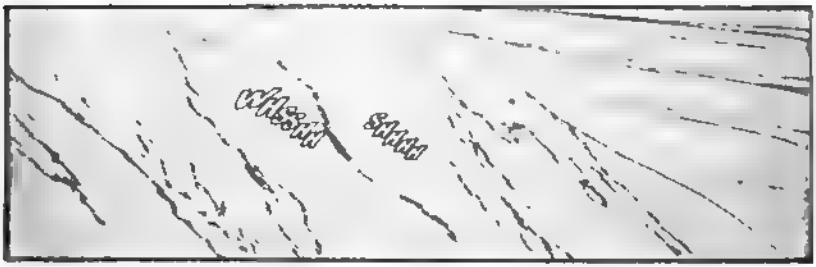


WHISSSS
FWHSSSH

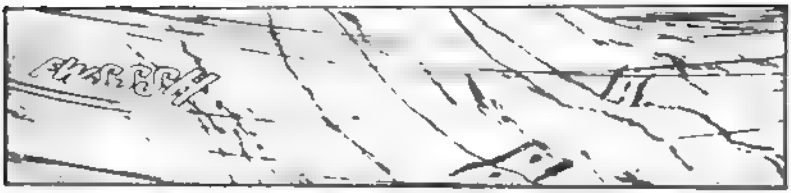
CUCKOO!
CUCKOO!

CUCKOO
CUCKOO
PAPA

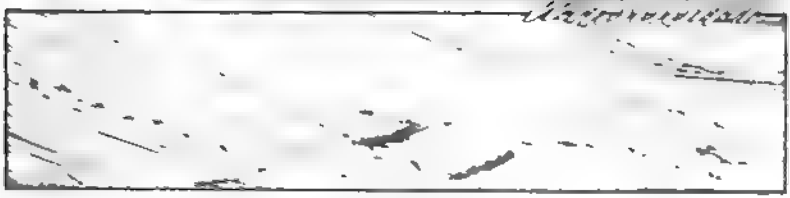

WHISSSS
WHISSHH

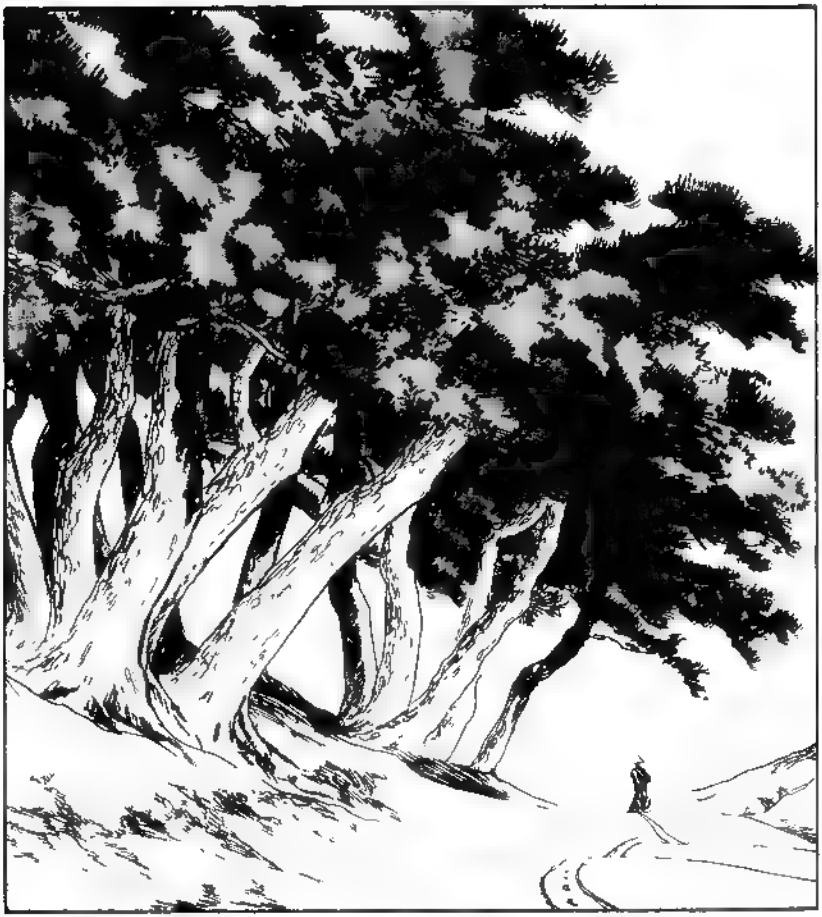

WHOOSH
SHHH

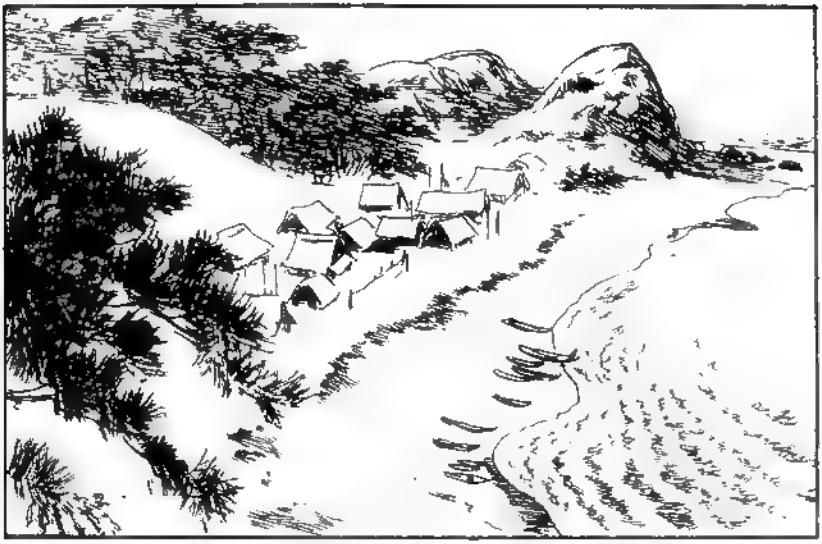
WHOOOOSH

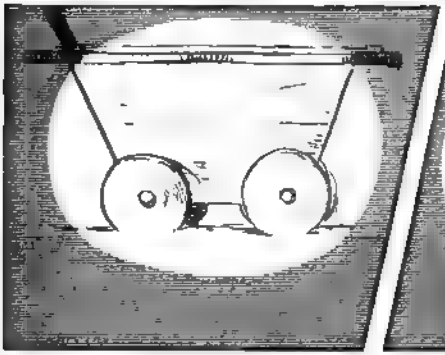


WHOOOSH

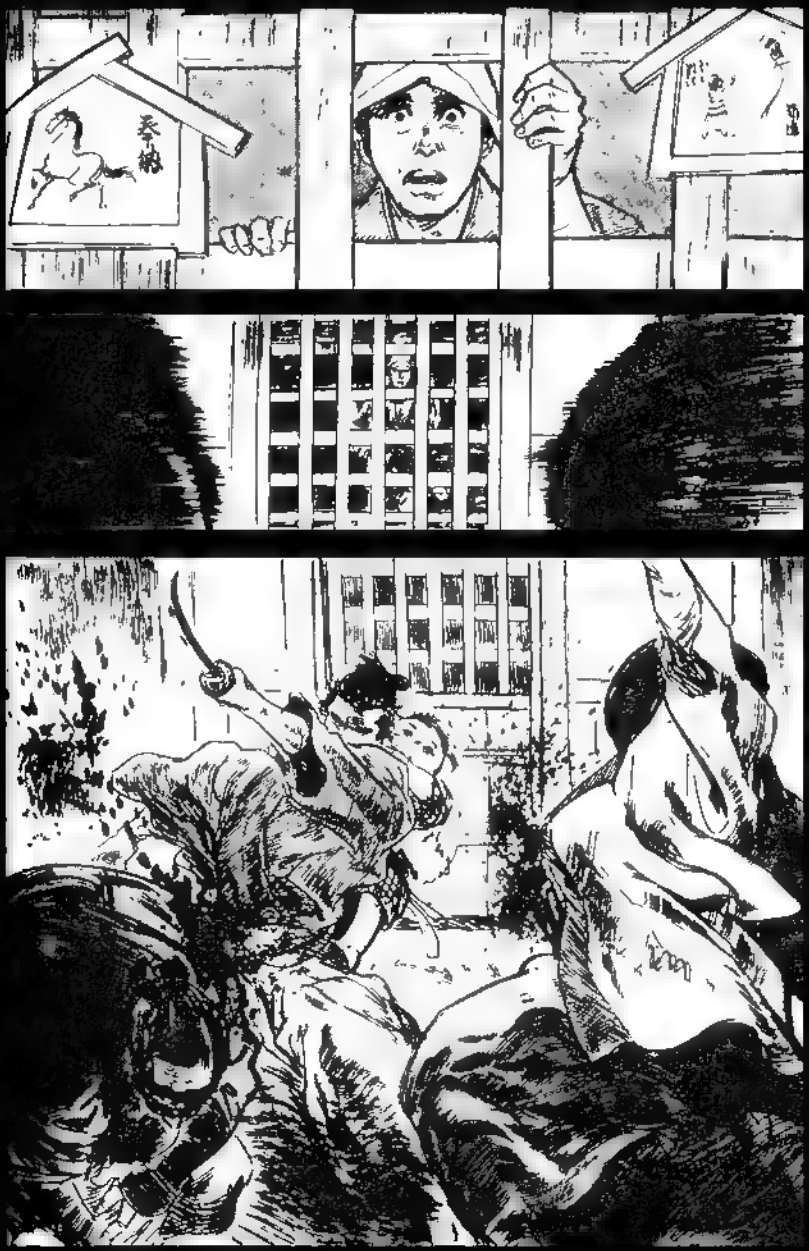


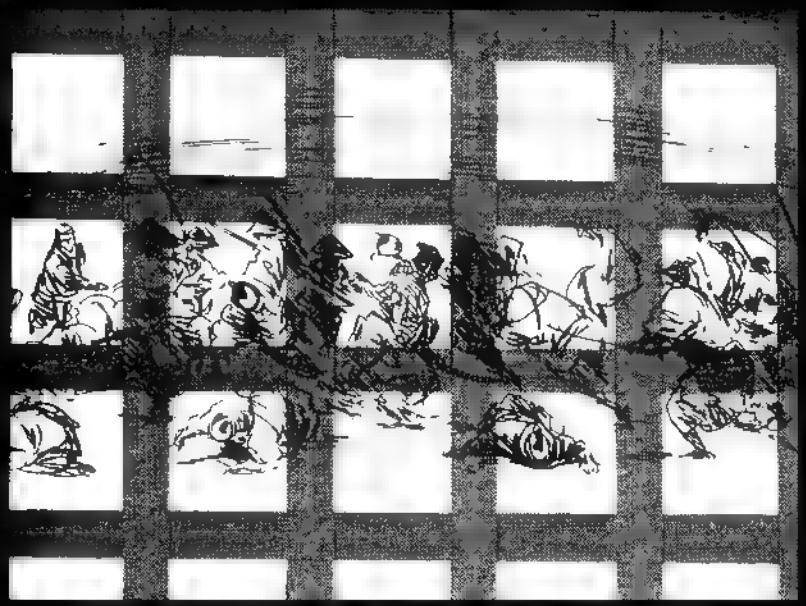


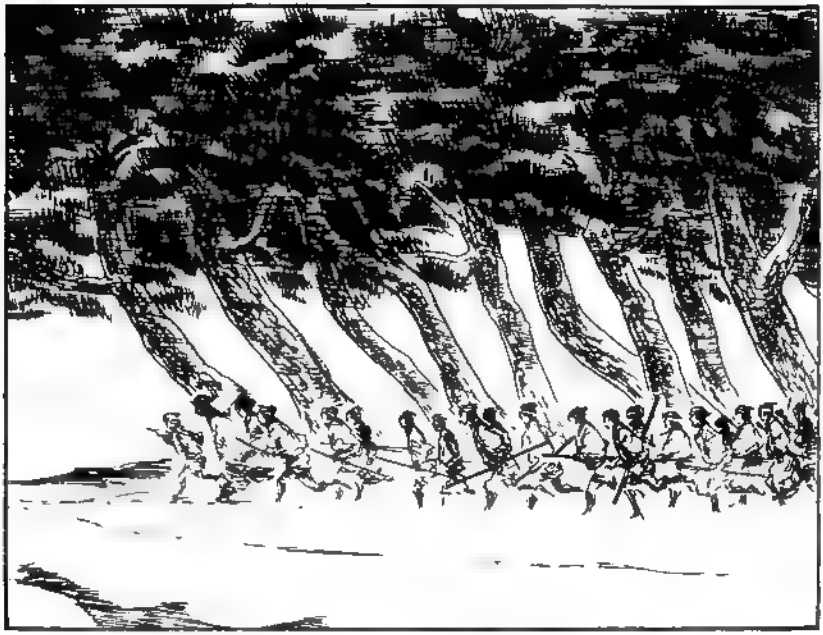


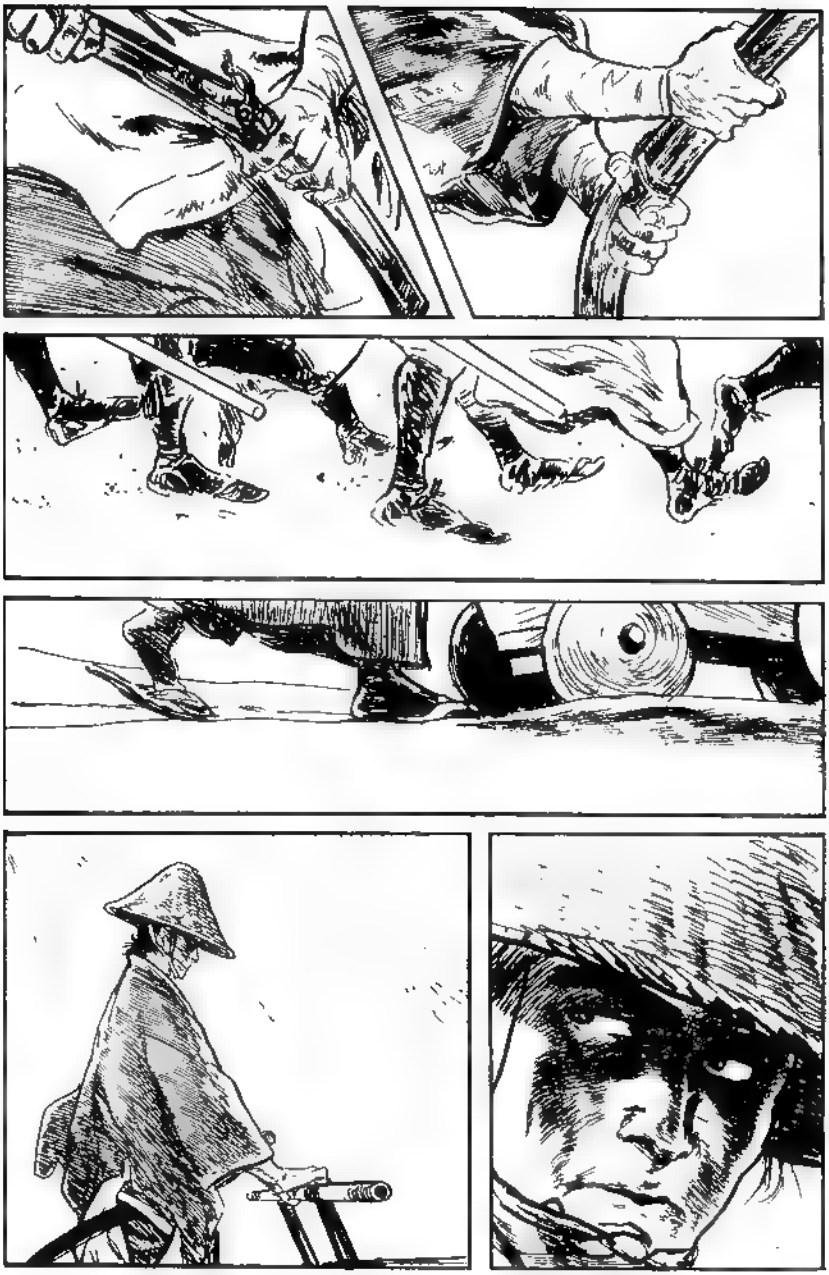


FIVE FIVE THOUSAND RYÔ...! HE DOESN'T GOT THE KID BUT THAT'S THE RÔNIN !
I'LL NEVER FORGET HIM
LONE WOLF AND CUB!



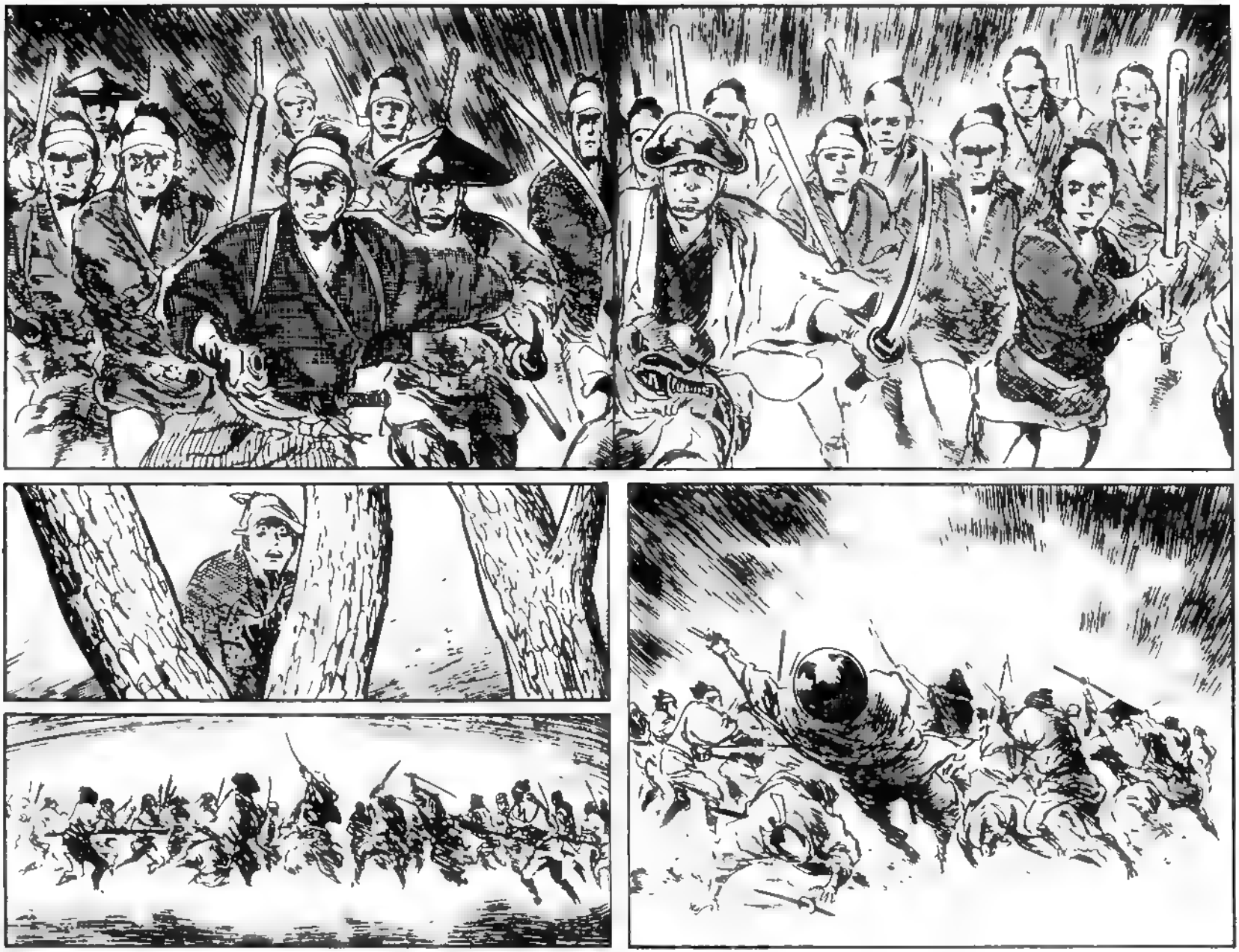




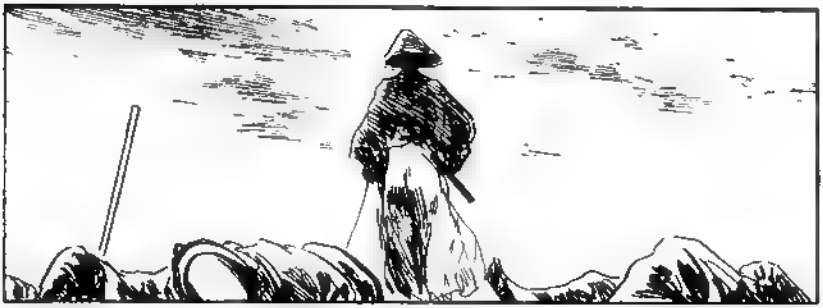


KSHAKK

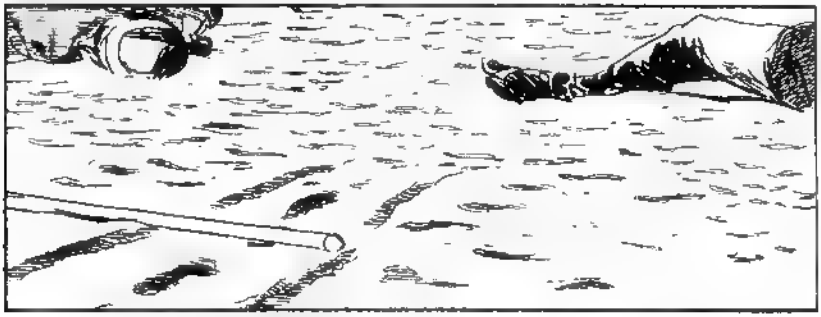
SPANGG
KTANGG
SHINGG
TANGG

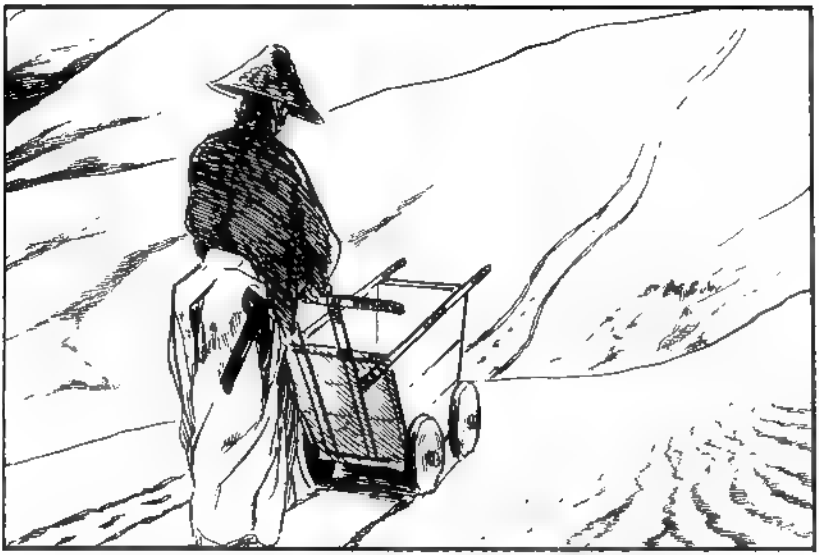


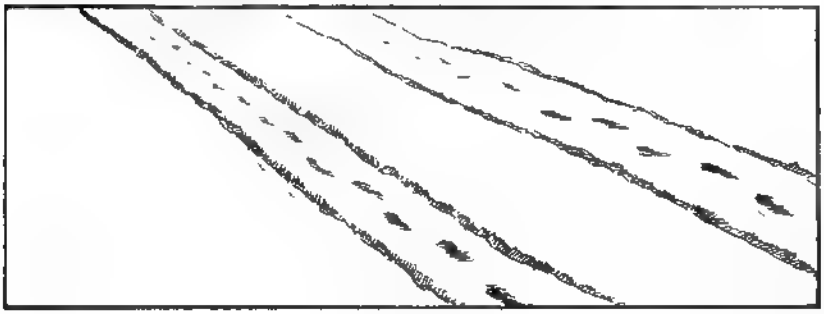
LORD!
ULP!

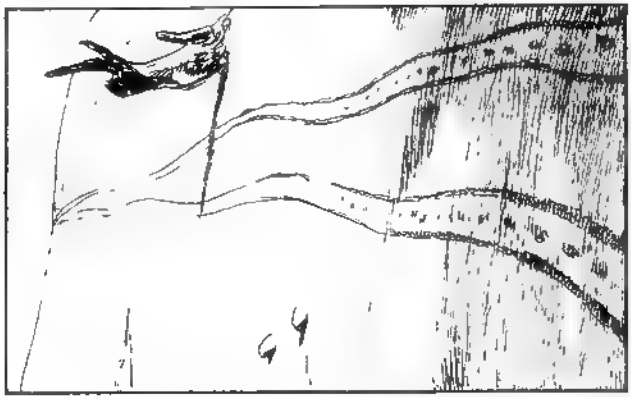


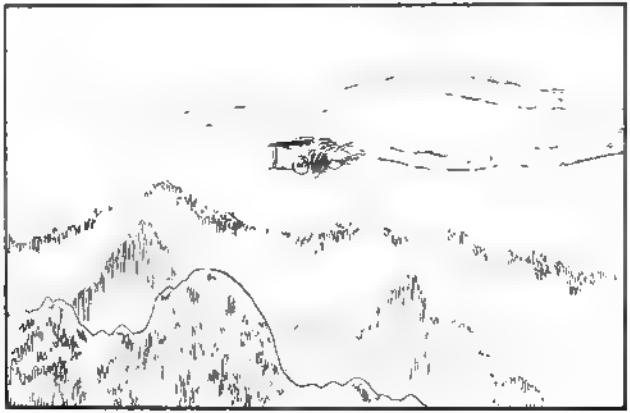
AUUGGH!!

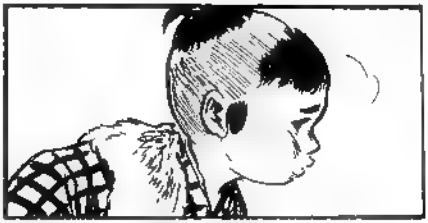


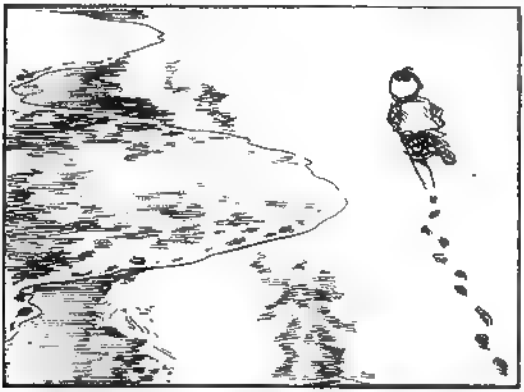


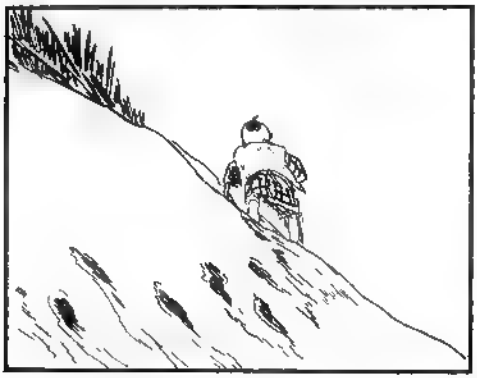


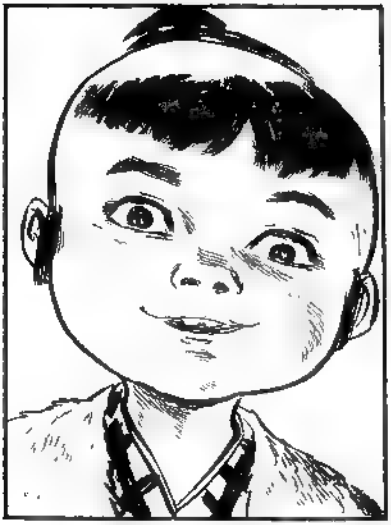


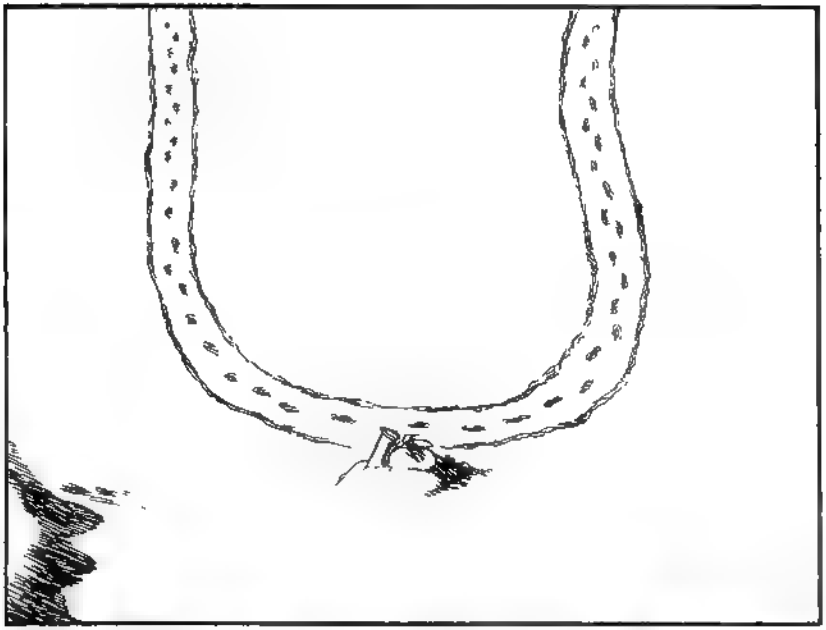


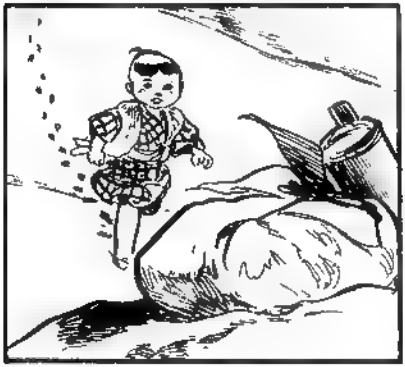


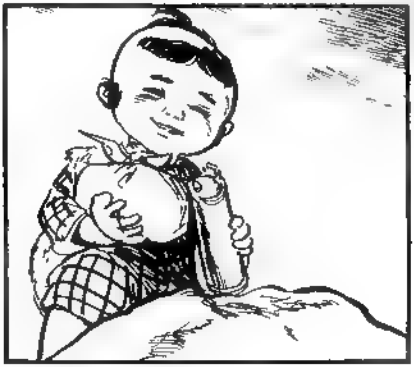




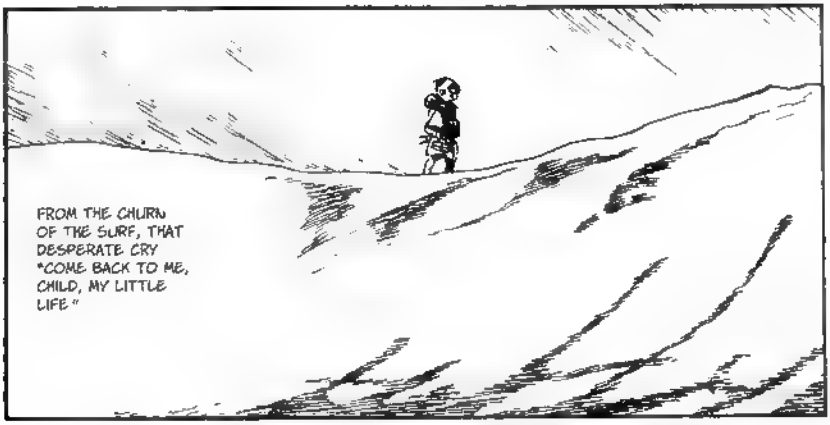








"CHILD, COME BACK TO ME" THE SEA SURGE ECHOED THE CALL OF THE CUCKOO

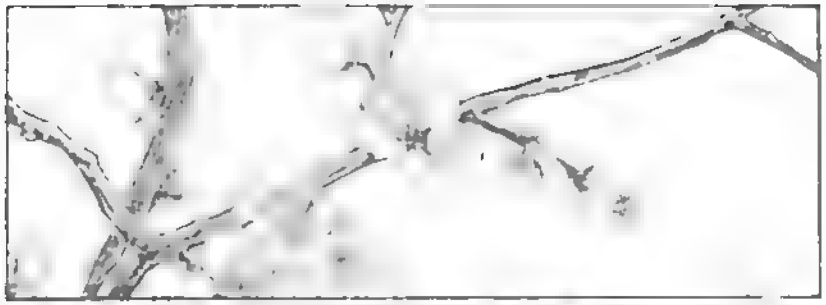

FROM THE CHURN OF THE SURF, THAT DESPERATE CRY "COME BACK TO ME, CHILD, MY LITTLE LIFE"

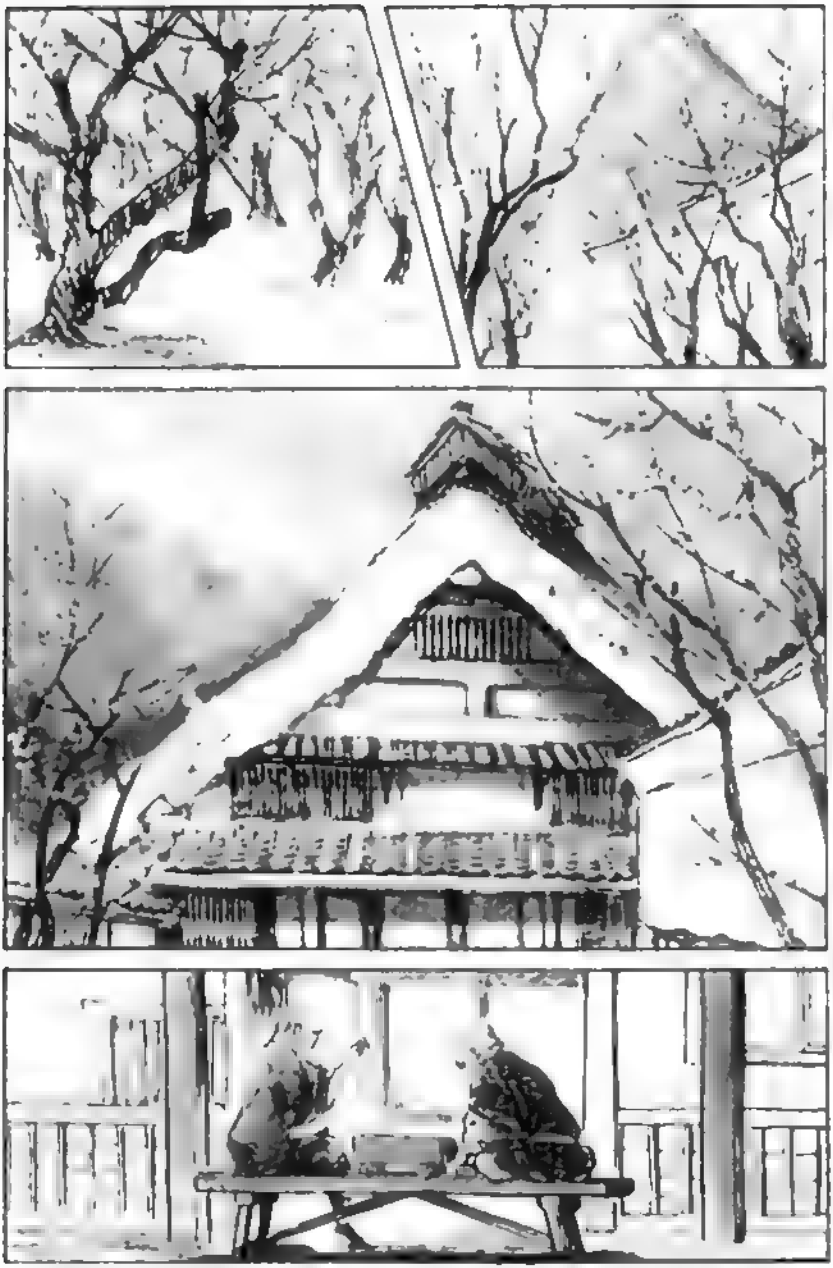
THE *LIFELINE* BINDING FATHER AND SON, CAST OUT ONCE AGAIN.
BEGGING FOR ONE MORE DAY TOGETHER. THE WHITE SANDS WHISPERED "COME TO ME, MY CHILD. COME TO ME, MY LIFE"

#MangaProject on irc.Dal.net
Lone Wolf and Cub

the ninety-second

Twilight of the Kuzokuwa



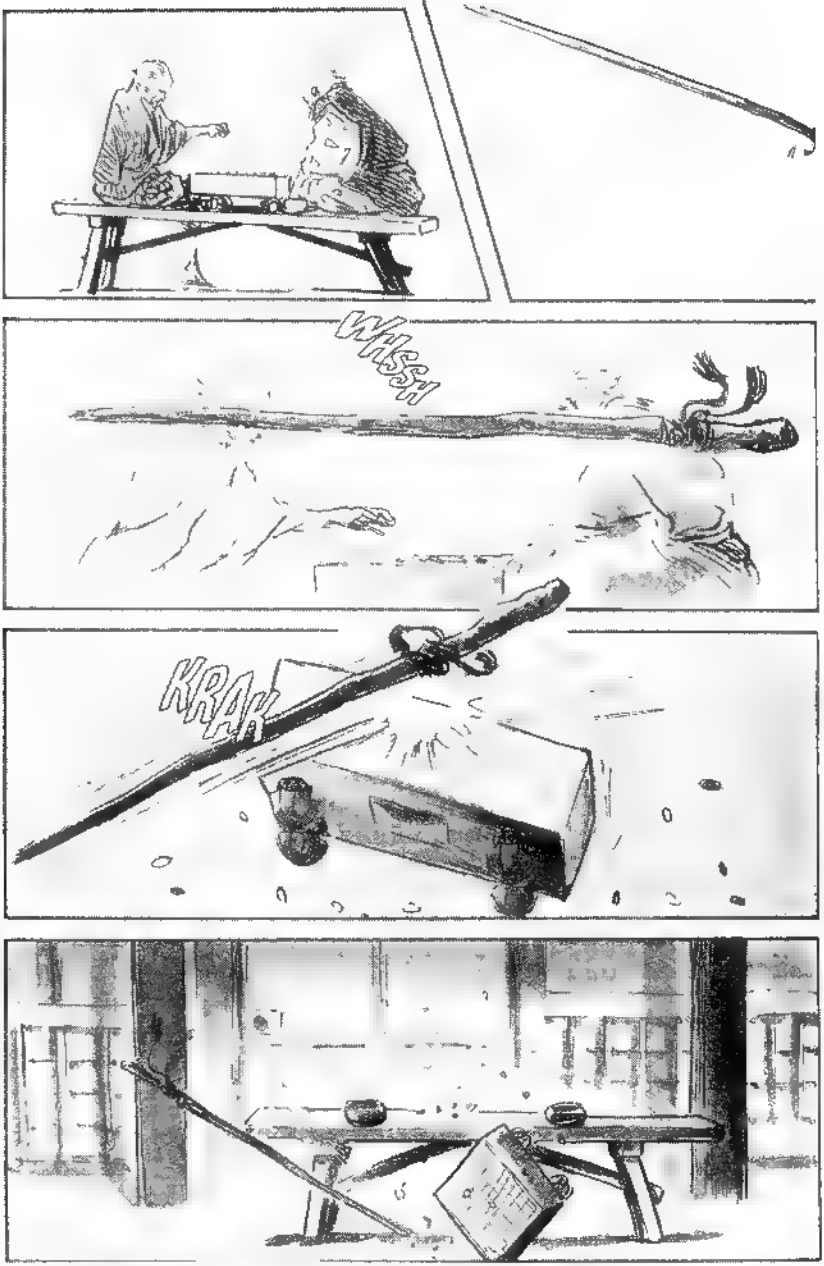


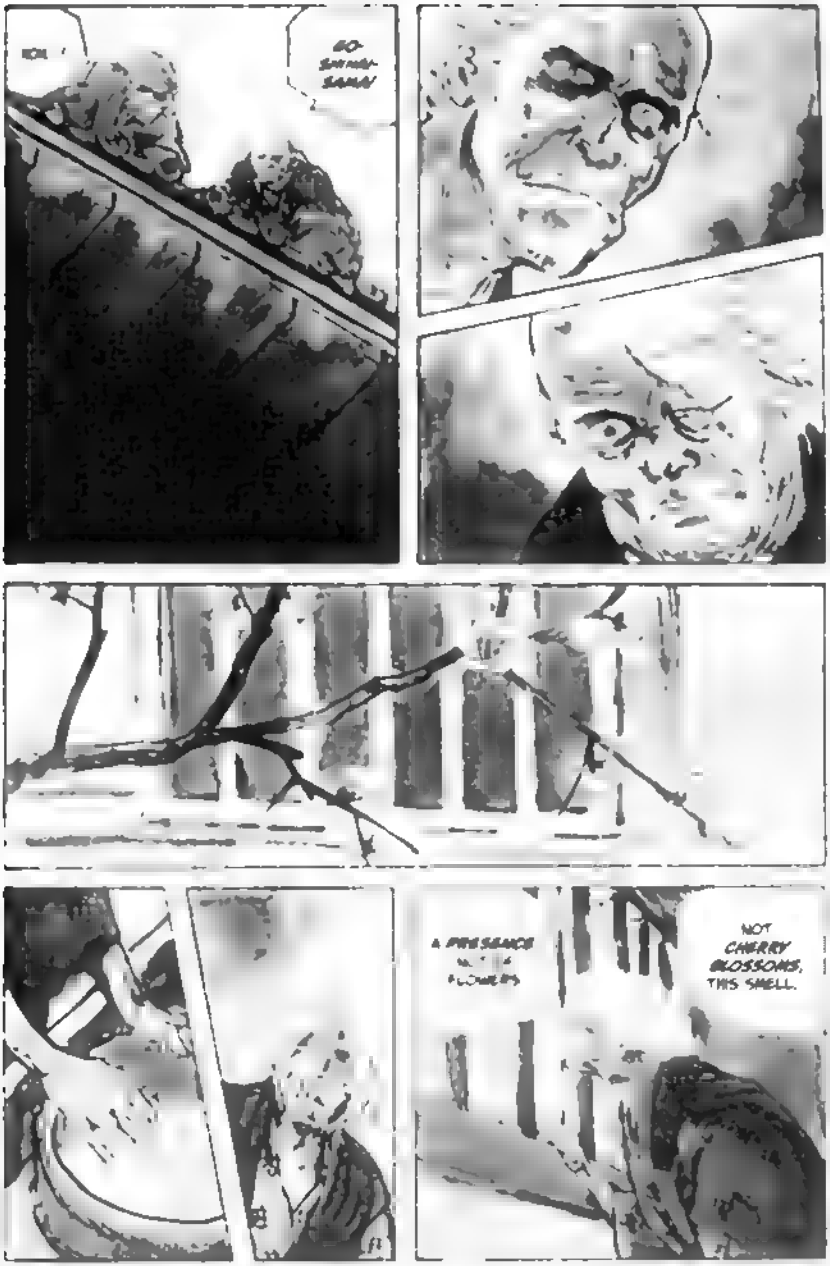
FASH

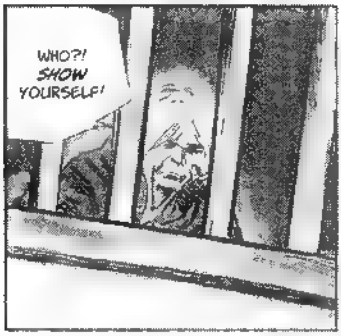
NO

CHOK

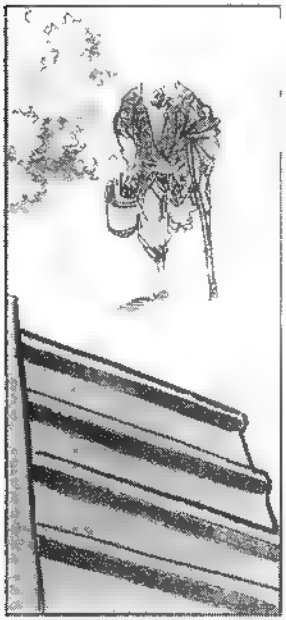
WELL WELL! GO-SHIKAI-SAMA!
WHAT BRINGS YOU FROM THE *LIKIVO* TO OUR RETIREMENT HOME?

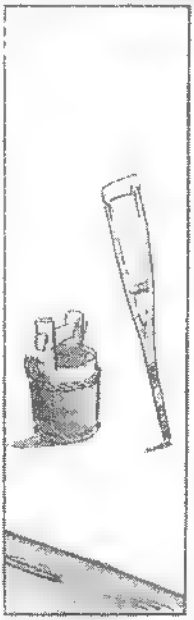

WHSSH
KRAK


SO SHINRA-SAMA!
A PRESENCE
FLOWERS
NOT CHERRY BLOSSOMS, THIS SMELL.

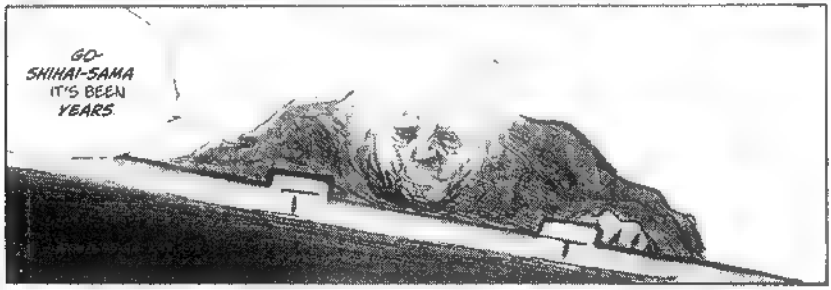

WHO?! SHOW YOURSELF!

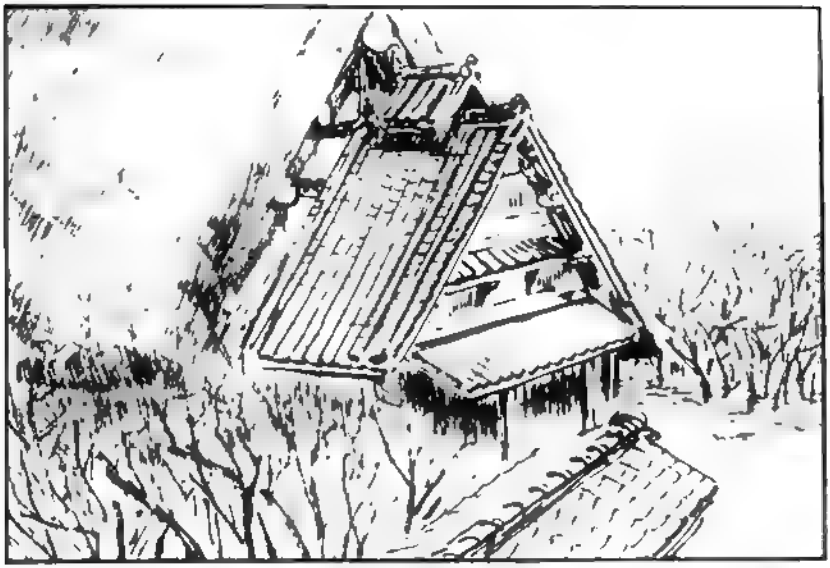
OH! GO-SHIHAI-SAMA!

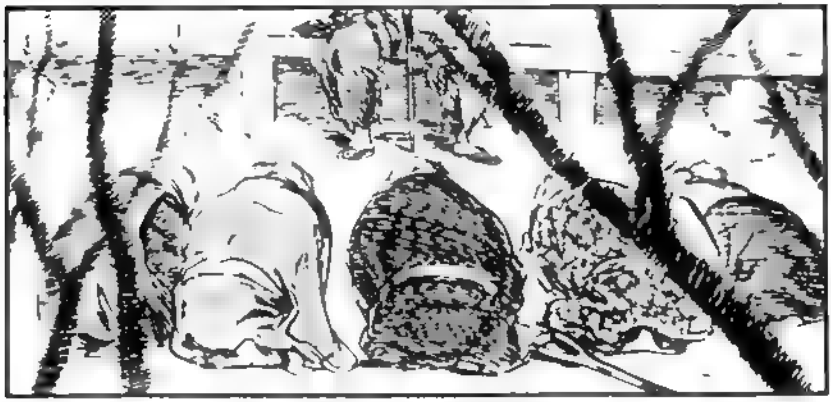




KLAK


GO-SHIHAI-SAMA IT'S BEEN YEARS.





HIRA!
MASTER
NOW YOU'VE AGED

AS HAVE YOU GO-SHINAI-SAMA. AND WHAT OF YOUR EYES?

BEKU.
MY LORD.

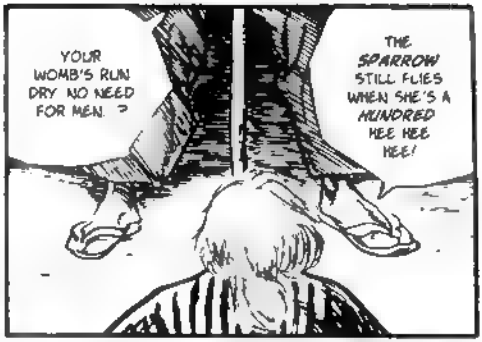
HOW IS LIFE IN KUROKUWA VILLAGE?
CALM ENOUGH TO CLEANSE THE SOUL. PEACEFUL AS HEAVEN.

NE-JI.
SIRE.

HOW MANY YEARS SINCE LAST WE PARTED?
SIXTEEN MY LORD AND NOW MY MASTER'S HEAD IS AS WHITE AS SNOW

OTA.
YES. ?

DOES T RESTRICT YOU?
NO, SIR AS YOU SAW YOURSELF



I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU ALL SO WELL.

YET, UPON *YOU* I SENSE A DARK SHADOW.
YOU SEEM MUCH *BURDENED*, MASTER.
IT SHOWS?

NO MORE *KUROKUWA* WILL SPEND THEIR LAST DAYS HERE.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN ?

ALL DEAD FROM YOUR LEADER KOZUNE TO THE LAST
NO MORE KUROKUWA LEFT ALIVE.

EXCEPT FOR A FORGOTTEN FIVE.

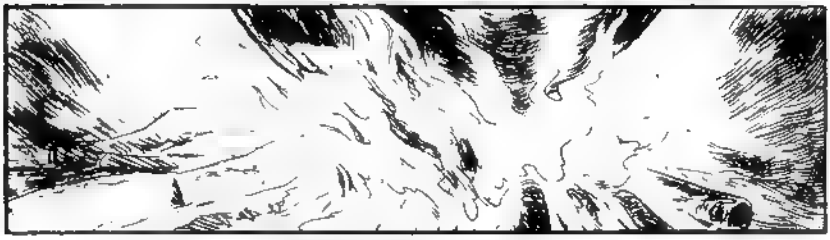
AND OF THE YAGYŪ I ALONE REMAIN.
BIZEN. KURATO. GUNBEI.

EVEN SHŌBEI AND SAYAKA OF THE MŌJIRO, LOST
NO LIRA NO OMOTE. JUST ONE OLD MAN.

AND FEW YEARS LEFT TO HIM AS WELL.

YET I STILL LIVE!

SO LET US CHAT ABOUT THE WORLD YOU LEFT BEHIND
PERHAPS OVER SOME TEA ?



NO *KUROKUWA*, AND ONE LAST *YAGYŪ* SO I'VE COME TO BORROW YOUR *SWORDS*
YOUR FAMOUS *SWORD WHEEL* NEVER *ONCE* DEFEATED

WITH THAT JUTSU, YOU SURVIVED EVERY ENEMY
IT GAVE YOU YOUR LIFE TODAY
WILL YOU USE IT AGAIN, FOR ME?

WE REFUSE.

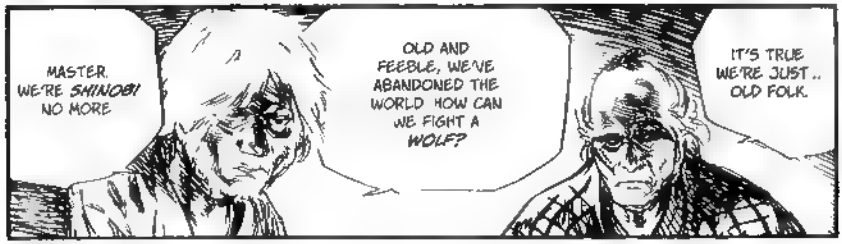
WE GAVE OUR LIVES TO THE KUROKUWA WE WERE NINJA WITH NO TOMORROW, ADRIFT ON SEAS OF BLOOD, A HELL OF FLASHING BLADES
WE TOOK NO SPOUSES, BORE NO CHILDREN ALONE IN THE WORLD, NOW IN HOKURIKU, NOW IN KAMIGATA, AWAKING WITH THE GOD OF DEATH UNDER ALIEN SKIES. FOR FIFTY YEARS!

THE CODE OF THE KUROKUWA—FIFTY YEARS OF SERVICE, THEN FREEDOM DUTY DISCHARGED, WE CAN DIE HERE IN KUROKUWA VILLAGE

WE'VE GAINED THAT RIGHT
EARNED IT, WITH THESE HANDS

YOU ARE THE MASTER, BUT THE CODE IS THE CODE NO MORE ORDERS!

I DON'T ORDER
I ASK

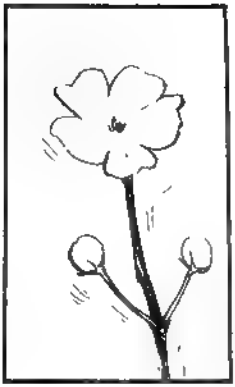

MASTER. WE'RE SHINOBI NO MORE
OLD AND FEEBLE, WE'VE ABANDONED THE WORLD HOW CAN WE FIGHT A WOLF?
IT'S TRUE WE'RE JUST .. OLD FOLK.

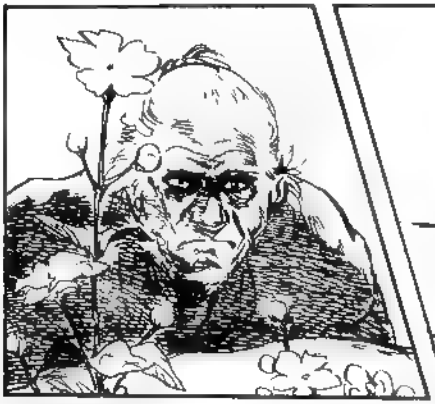
THEN WHY DO YOU STILL USE JUTSU?!
IF YOU'RE JUST OLD FOLK, MY DAGGER AND STAFF WOULD HAVE KILLED YOU!

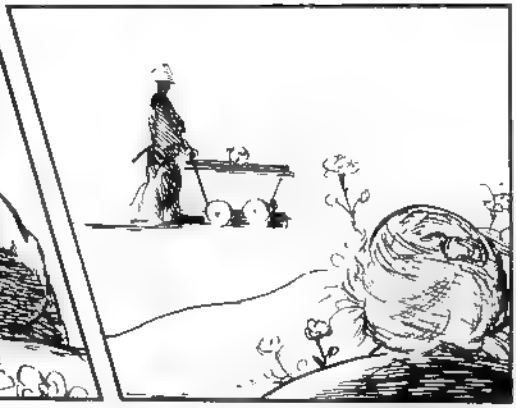
YET YOU USE YOUR SKILLS! NO YOU ARE STILL NINJA!

A FIREWATCHER WILL YOU TAKE YOU TO ŌGAM. ITTŌ! ALL IS ARRANGED!

GO! IMMEDIATELY!

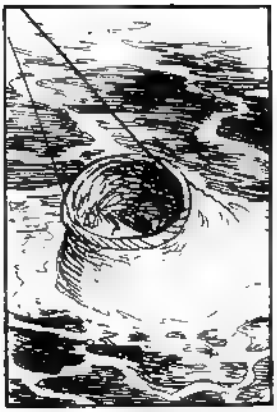






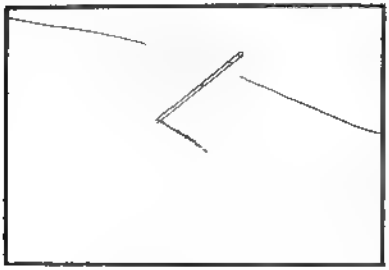
UNNG!

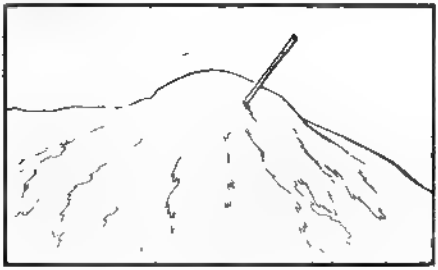
UNGH

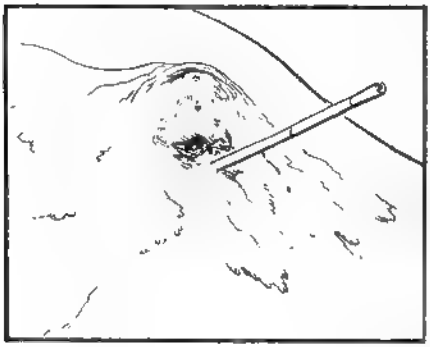


HO! HERE'S A BIG 'UN!

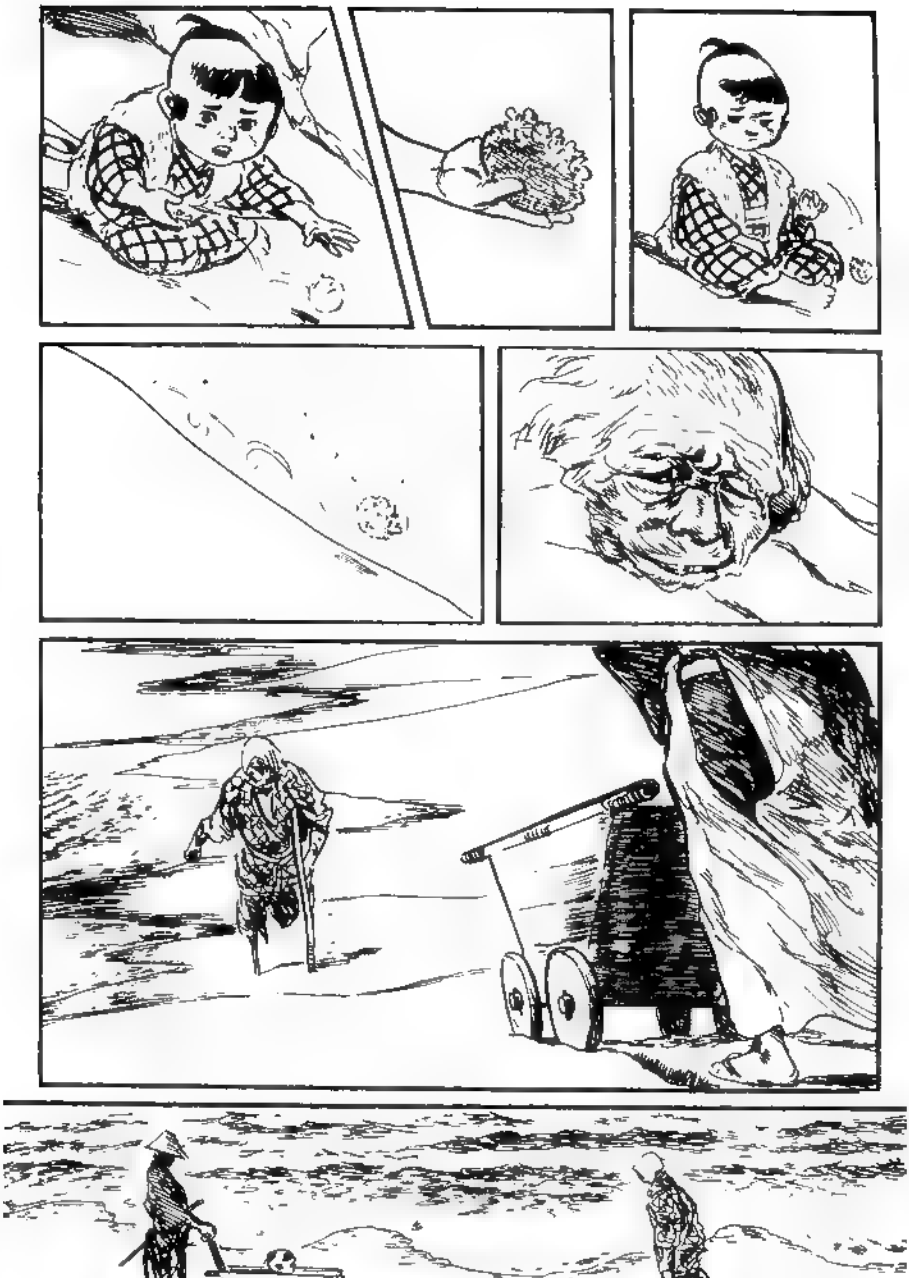
KLAP
KLAP

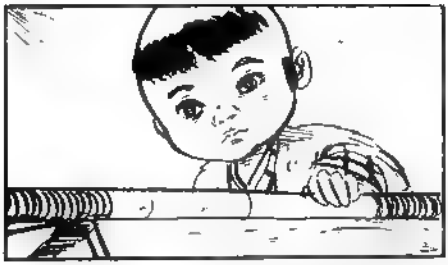


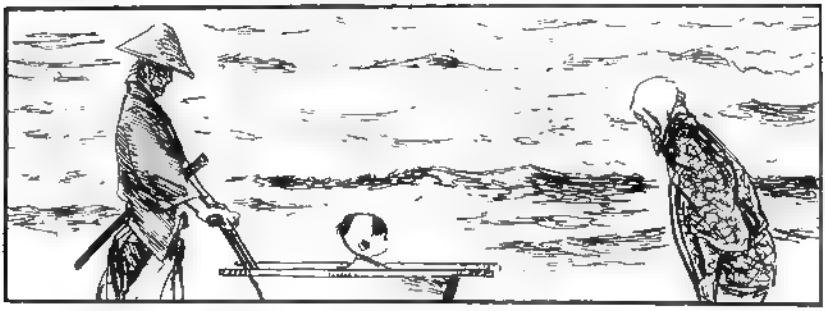




PLOP

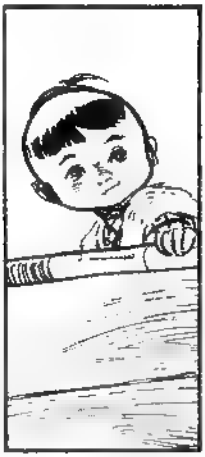


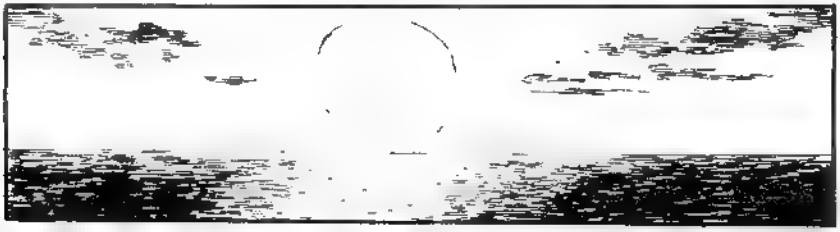




SPLSH
CHKK
AH!
TH-
THANK
'EE!

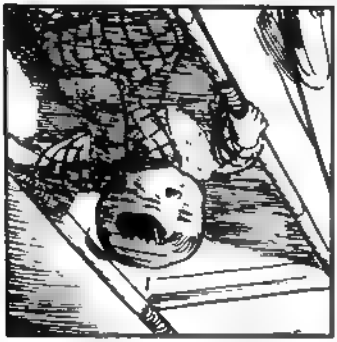
THANK 'EE, KIND SIR!



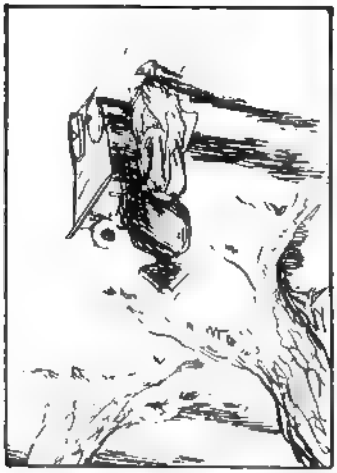


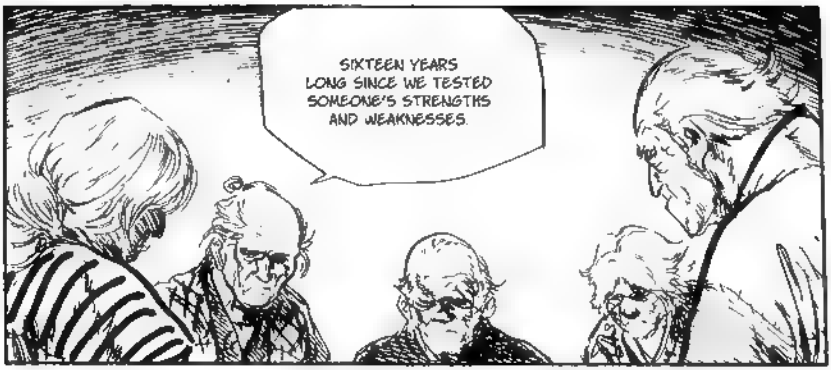
GARA
GARA

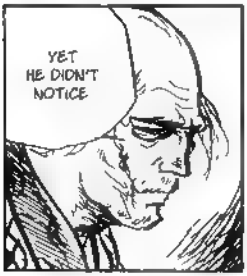
GARA



HAHH-
CHOO!



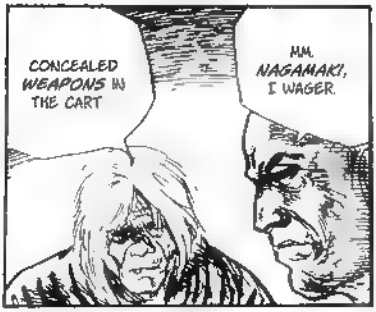

SIXTEEN YEARS LONG SINCE WE TESTED SOMEONE'S STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES.


YET HE DIDN'T NOTICE

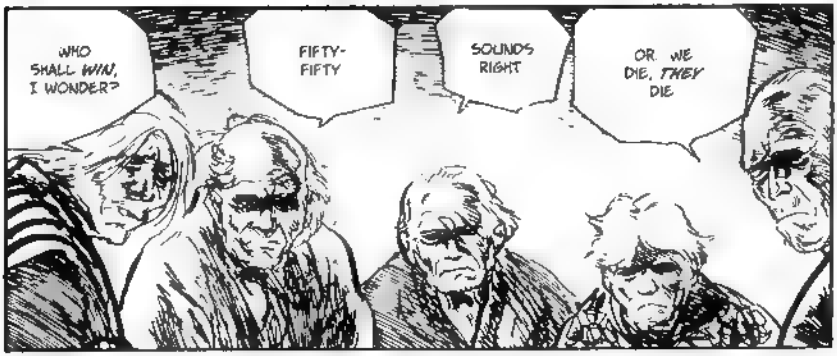
WE HID OUR SAKKI ?

WE WERE AS SAND AND TREES.
YET HE'S GOOD, THAT MAN.

PERFECT! WHEN HE SUPPORTED ME. HIS BREATH CONTROL!
NO OPENING IMPERVIOUS.


CONCEALED WEAPONS IN THE CART
HM. NAGAMAKI, I WAGER.

WHBLOSH


WHO SHALL *WIN*, I WONDER?
FIFTY-FIFTY
SOUNDS RIGHT
OR WE DIE, *THEY* DIE

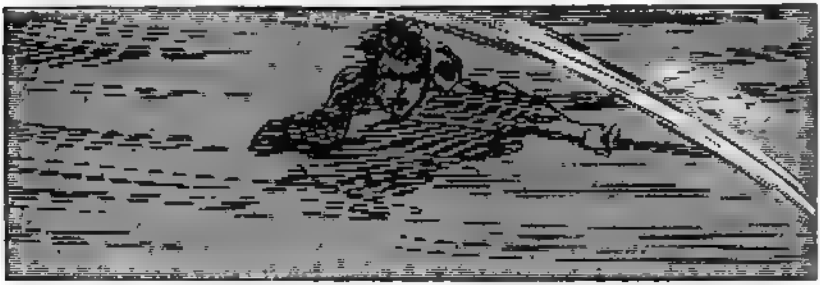
SPLASH

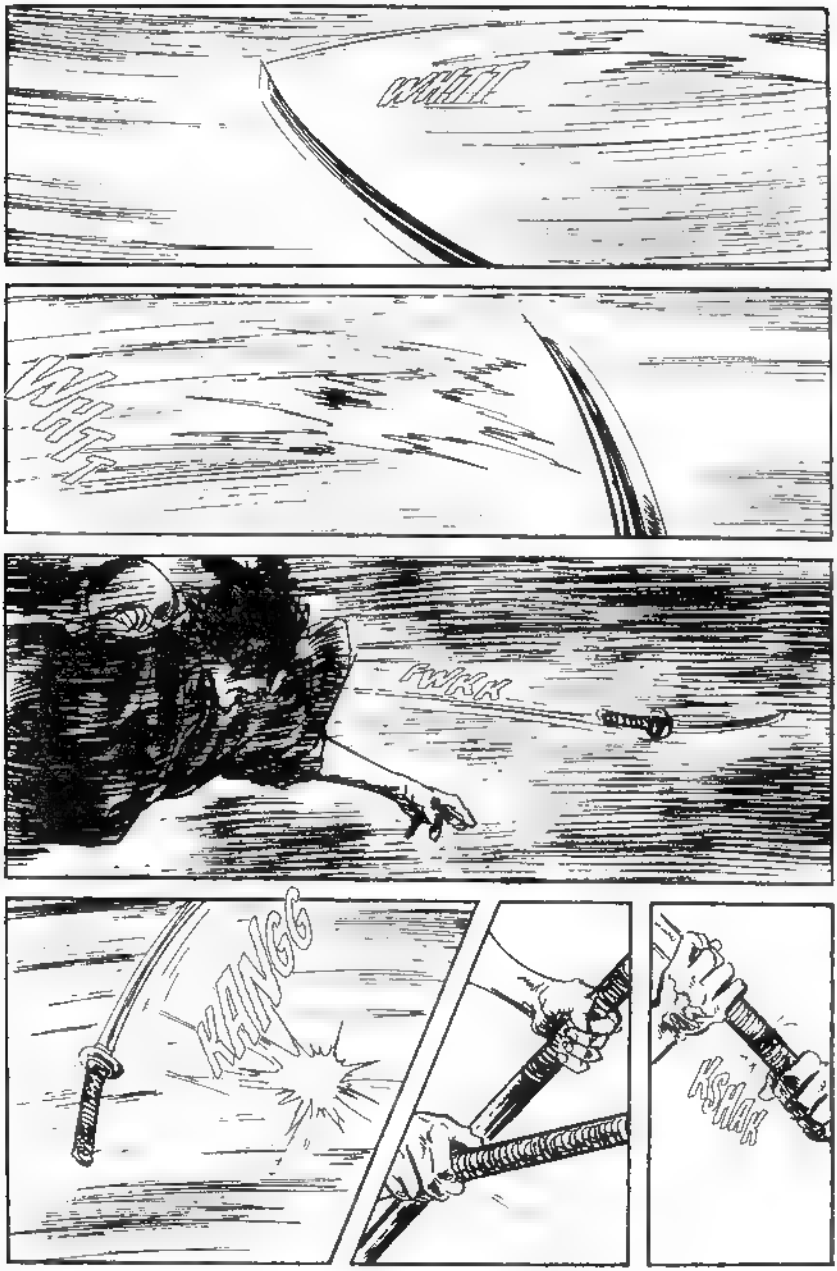
WHSH
WHSH
WHSH

EWHSSHH

WISH
WISH
WISH
WISH

WHIPP

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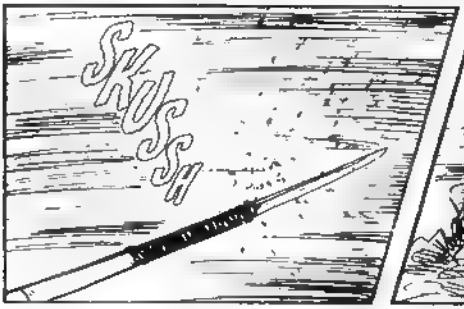

SKUSSH

CHOK

CHUDD

IF WE HAD CHILDREN
YES ABOUT HIS AGE

AND IF WE HAD GRAND-CHILDREN
CUTE LITTLE DEVILS, THEY'D BE LIKE HIM
GRAND-CHILDREN

HOW MANY YEARS DO WE HAVE LEFT?
ONE ? TWO ? FIVE AT MOST

LONE WOLF AND CUB BOOK EIGHTEEN: THE END
TO BE CONTINUED

GLOSSARY

ashigara
Lightly armed foot soldiers, the lowest ranks of the samurai caste.

buke
A samurai household.

bushi
A samurai. A member of the warrior class.

bushidō
The way of the warrior. Also known as *shudō*.

daikan
An official who collected taxes owed to Edo and oversaw public works, agriculture, and other projects administered by the central government.

daimyō
A feudal lord.

Edo
The capital of medieval Japan and the seat of the shogunate. The site of modern-day Tokyo.

Fudai daimyō
The inner circle of clans pledging allegiance to the Tokugawa. The Fudai clans were Tokugawa allies even before Tokugawa Ieyasu's decisive victory of Sekigahara that launched the Tokugawa Shogunate.

go-shihai-sama
Master.

han
A feudal domain.

nashigo
Ladder.

hōgen
The second highest rank of Buddhist priest.

hōin
Hoin dai wakō, the highest ranked Buddhist priests.

honorifics
Japan is a class and status society, and proper forms of address are critical. Common markers of respect are the prefixes *o* and *go*, and a wide range of suffixes. Some of the suffixes you will encounter in *Lone Wolf and Cub*
dono – archaic, used for higher-ranked or highly respected figures.
sama – used for superiors.

jiji
Old man. Grandfather. Both intimate... and condescending.

jutsu
A martial arts skill, especially the techniques of the ninja.

kōgi kaishakunin
The shogun's own second, who performed executions ordered by the shōgun.

koku
A bale of rice. The traditional measure of a *han's* wealth, a measure of its agricultural land and productivity.

kuzuyu
A gruel of arrowroot starch sweetened with sugar. A food of the very poor.

meifumadō
The Buddhist Hell. The way of demons and damnation.

nagamaki
A two-handed weapon taller than a man, with a long, curved blade.

ō-metsuke
Chief inspector. The supreme law-enforcement officer of the shōgunate.

rōnin
A masterless samurai. Literally, "one adrift on the waves." Members of the samurai caste who have lost their masters through the dissolution of *han*, expulsion for misbehavior, or other reasons. Prohibited from working as farmers or merchants under the strict Confucian caste system imposed by the Tokugawa shōgunate, many impoverished *ronin* became "hired guns" for whom the code of the samurai was nothing but empty words.

ryō
A gold piece, worth 60 *monme*.

ryū
Often translated as "school." The many variations of swordsmanship and other martial arts were passed down from generation to generation to the offspring of the originator of the technique or set of techniques, and to any students that sought to learn from the master. The largest schools had their own *dōjō* training centers and scores of students. An effective swordsman had to study the different techniques of the various schools to know how to block them in combat. Many *ryū* also had a set of special, secret techniques that were only taught to school initiates.

sakibure-sōmetsuke
Advance runner. Metsuke inspector in charge of clearing the road for the shōgun.

sakki
The palpable desire to kill, directed at another person. Sometimes called blood lust. Based on the concept of *ki*, or energy, found in spiritual practices and Japanese martial arts like Aikido. These body energies can be felt beyond the physical self by the trained and self-aware.

sankyo sanke
The three sub-branches of the Tokugawa Clan. When there was no heir to the main Tokugawa line, one would be picked from two of these clans, while the fuku-shōgun (Vice-shōgun) always came from the third.

sayu
Unflavored hot water.

seppuku
The right to kill oneself with honor to atone for failure, or to follow one's master into death. Only the samurai class was allowed this glorious but excruciating death. The abdomen was cut horizontally, followed by an upward cut to spill out the intestines. When possible, a *kaishakunin* performed a beheading after the cut was made to shorten the agony.

Tozama daimyō
Daimyō who rallied to the Tokugawa side only after the Tokugawa victory at Sekigahara.

ukiyo
The floating world. The daily, and transient, world of man.

KAZUO KOIKE

Though widely respected as a powerful writer of graphic fiction, Kazuo Koike has spent a lifetime reaching beyond the bounds of the comics medium. Aside from co-creating and writing the successful *Lone Wolf and Cub* and *Crying Freeman* manga, Koike has hosted television programs; founded a golf magazine; produced movies; written popular fiction, poetry, and screenplays; and mentored some of Japan's best manga talent.

Lone Wolf and Cub was first serialized in Japan in 1970 (under the title *Kozure Okami*) in *Manga Action* magazine and continued its hugely popular run for many years, being collected as the stories were published, and reprinted worldwide. Koike collected numerous awards for his work on the series throughout the next decade. Starting in 1972, Koike adapted the popular manga into a series of six films, the *Baby Cart Assassin* saga, garnering widespread commercial success and critical acclaim for his screenwriting.

This wasn't Koike's only foray into film and video. In 1996, *Crying Freeman*, the manga Koike created with artist Ryoichi Ikegami, was produced in Hollywood and released to commercial success in Europe and is currently awaiting release in America.

And to give something back to the medium that gave him so much, Koike started the *Gekiga Sonjuku*, a college course aimed at helping talented writers and artists — such as *Ranma 1/2* creator Rumiko Takahashi — break into the comics field.

The driving focus of Koike's narrative is character development, and his commitment to character is clear: "Comics are carried by characters. If a character is well created, the comic becomes a hit." Kazuo Koike's continued success in comics and literature has proven this philosophy true.

GOSEKI KOJIMA

Goseki Kojima was born on November 3, 1928, the very same day as the godfather of Japanese comics, Osamu Tezuka. While just out of junior high school, the self-taught Kojima began painting advertising posters for movie theaters to pay his bills.

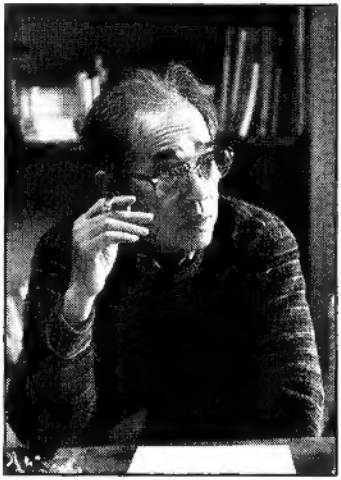
In 1950, Kojima moved to Tokyo, where the postwar devastation had given rise to special manga forms for audiences too poor to buy the new manga magazines. Kojima created art for *kami-shibai*, or "paper-play" narrators, who would use manga story sheets to present narrated street plays. Kojima moved on to creating works for the *kashi-bon* market, bookstores that rented out books, magazines, and manga to mostly low-income readers. He soon became highly popular among *kashi-bon* readers.

In 1967, Kojima broke into the magazine market with his series *Dojinki*. As the manga magazine market grew and diversified, he turned out a steady stream of popular series.

In 1970, in collaboration with Kazuo Koike, Kojima began the work that would seal his reputation, *Kozure Okami* (*Lone Wolf and Cub*). Before long the story had become a gigantic hit, eventually spinning off a television series, six motion pictures, and even theme song records. Koike and Kojima were soon dubbed the "golden duo" and produced success after success on their way to the pinnacle of the manga world.

When *Manga Japan* magazine was launched in 1994, Kojima was asked to serve as consultant, and he helped train the next generation of manga artists.

In his final years, Kojima turned to creating original graphic novels based on the movies of his favorite director, Akira Kurosawa. Kojima passed away on January 5, 2000 at the age of 71.



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Lone Wolf and Cub